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THE WAY OF THE PREACHER

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THE

WAY OF THE PREACHER

AN INTERPRETATION OF A CALLING

By JOHN A. KERN

Professor of Practical Theology in Vanderbilt University
Author of "The Ministry to the Congregation"

"Be not one that stretches out his hands for receiving, but draws them in for giving. . . . And every prophet who teaches the truth, if he does not practice what he teaches, is a false prophet."—*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*

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To

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"I, however, give thanks to God that with what little ability I possess I have in these four books striven to depict, not the sort of man I am myself (for my defects are very many), but the sort of man he ought to be who desires to labor in sound, that is, in Christian, doctrine, not for his own instruction only, but for that of others also."—AUGUSTINE, *On Christian Doctrine*, IV. 31.

PREFACE

It is every man's wisdom to waken in himself some vivid sense of his calling. Certainly such a sense of vocation is no less than a necessity to the Christian preacher. What is it to receive and to finish this ministry of preaching? is the question which, amid many pressing duties and appeals, he will be fain to ask. To this question an answer is here offered. A very partial and imperfect answer; for the field is wide, and each of us can only tell in part even the little which it has been given him to see.

It is in the New Testament that the way of the preacher is truly shown. There we shall find the determinative idea of his office and the manner of life, within and without, that it demands. He must, indeed, adapt himself to particular circumstances, which are ever changing, and meet the conditions of the time; but his call to service and the service to which he is called are essentially the same now as in "the beginning of the gospel." Hence it must be essentially a New Testament study to which our inquiries will lead.

I have written nothing new. But it has been with joy and trembling that I have tried to set forth, using numerous personal examples both from the present and the past, the truth that from childhood has wrought with insistent sway in my own innermost life. My earliest ideal of happiness was that of the preacher's

calling; nor has it yet been displaced by any other. Last Sunday morning a member of the congregation to which I had ministered said, "What a privilege you ministers have!" It is even so—a greater than the worthiest can appreciate. Therefore let no one judge the calling by the men who represent it. Rather let them be judged by its opportunities and requirements.

The form of talks, or lectures, that my treatment of the subject took in the classroom has not been changed. It is a very homelike classroom in which the lectures were delivered—a place of free conference—and I count myself happy to have this opportunity of opening its doors to whoever may choose to enter.

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY, *October*, 1901.

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INTRODUCTORY

The Ruling Motives

Looking for the motive of an act, we are likely to find more than one. Why did I read this morning's newspaper? why did I enter this room? why have I chosen the service of Christ? why am I becoming a preacher of the gospel? Let us not suppose that the answer to any such question, great or small, is entirely simple. What are the motives? would be the truer question. Just as there may usually be given more than one reason for a belief, so may there usually be found more than one reason for an act.

But better still is the question, Of all the motives that touch the will, which is the highest? For not only is it true that some may be stronger than others in any particular case, but also that some are of finer quality than others, in themselves, always and everywhere. Happily there need be no difference of judgment as to which these are—at least as to which is the highest of all. The disposition to do the will of God, in whom we have our life—love to God—is the supreme motive of conduct. And akin to this, even inseparable from it, is the disposition to do good to those who are made in the image of God, ourselves and all others—which is love to man.

Now if proof of the supreme worthiness of this moral love be asked, none can be given. For example, if a man should say, "To my mind the claim of appetite is equally high with that of moral love; there is no more reason why one should rule than the other"—it could not be proved to him that he saw falsely. But there is

no such person. We are so made as to know, however unfaithful our lives may be, that man is higher than the brute, intellect than flesh and blood, character than intellect, love than appetite. This graded excellence is seen with the inner eye no less truly than material objects—rocks, trees, birds of the air, earth and sun—in their relations to one another, are seen outwardly.

But this is not all. To say that a certain motive is the highest, is to say that we *ought* to do what it prompts. To know a spring of action to be the best in quality, is to feel ourselves under obligation to act always in accordance with its influence.

This knowledge, with the accompanying authoritative impulse, is conscience. Whenever, therefore, any lower motive comes into competition with the highest, so that the two are urging the will in opposite directions, conscience with its unimpeachable authority declares that the highest must rule. Thus are all other motives brought under control. And they need it. Give an appetite, or the desire for property, or even a natural affection full sway; set it upon the throne: and what will be the result? Disorder, degeneration, death. But moral love, however it may need enlightenment, needs no control. Indeed, to limit or restrain it would be immoral. Imagine a man to be wholly under the impelling power of this love, and destitute of conscience; imagine another man to be wholly under the impelling power of conscience, and destitute of moral love. The lines of conduct pursued by the two men would be the same. For love would persuade to the best possible service toward all beings—that is to say, the doing of the will of God; and conscience would command the very same course of conduct—the doing of the will of

God. The two are one. In the human soul—yours and mine, everybody's—as it asserts itself in consciousness, the supreme imperative is love.

Turning now to the Christian revelation, what do we find? It was no uncommon inquiry in our Lord's day, Which is the greatest commandment of all? Some of the rabbis supposed it to be the commandment concerning the Sabbath; others had other opinions. A certain rabbi brought the question to Jesus. It was the same question with reference to the Scriptures, the outwardly revealed law, that we have just now been asking with reference to conscience, the inwardly revealed law. Jesus' answer came clear and distinct as the voice from Sinai: The life of our whole being must be devoted to God, and freely shared with our fellow-men—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law and the prophets" (Matt. xxii. 37-40). All therefore that God has ever commanded is in this twofold law of love. So perfect is the harmony between the word of the Lord Jesus and the deepest moral intuitions of the soul.

But how is it that we are *commanded* to love? Why should the word be, Thou *shalt?* Is not love essentially free—a disposition of the heart and a voluntary service? Be it so. But as we have just seen, when this disposition is combated by some lower propensity, so that both cannot be acted upon and consequently choice must be made between the two, conscience utters its voice in behalf of the supremacy of the highest. It is right that the highest should prevail at every point. This, then, is

the significance of the authoritative *Thou shalt:* it shows the oneness of love and holiness. Not that we can yield the heart—at least, directly—from being commanded to do it, but that by the command we are made to know that this yielding of the heart in God's name is the law of our being. Besides, through obedience love is maintained and increased.

Again, it is not hard to understand why this should be the law of our being. We are intended to be followers of God, to become partakers of the Divine nature, to say "Our Father who art in heaven." But God in his absolute holiness is love; therefore must our inmost spirit also be the spirit of holy love. Nothing more could be required; but nothing less could suffice. We are what we are and may become what we ought to be, because of what God is. In Jesus is the perfect revelation of this likeness; in his precepts, the perfect rule of our life and the divine principle upon which it rests: "Love your enemies, . . . that ye may be the sons of your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. v. 44, 45).

Clearer and more satisfying will this great truth appear, as we yield ourselves more loyally to its power. But here is the depravity and the failure. It is hard for the selfish, sinful soul to act in all things as a member of the divinely organized social body to which it belongs, to accept the universal will of God as the rule of its conduct, to make itself at home in a life of unselfish devotion. Indeed, there are those who say that pure unselfishness, in any form or measure, is impossible. I have heard that in a committee on the revision of a Church hymnal, one of the members spoke against admitting Francis Xavier's fine-toned confessional hymn,

> My God, I love thee not because
> I hope for heaven thereby,

on the ground that there is no such thing as disinterested affection. Now if it should be said that the right-minded man never loses the sense of his own worth and the desire for his own happiness—which is self-love—the assertion need not for a moment be called in question. But this by no means proves our nature so poor as to be incapable of affection for others; and such affection, so far as it exists at all, must be disinterested.

We might easily learn this truth in lower spheres than our own.

> But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee;
> And the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee.

Job speaks of the ostrich—that lays her eggs on the sand, forgetting that the passing foot may crush them, and "is hardened against her young ones [or supposed to be] as if they were not hers"—as a strange exception in nature. When an ant-hill is broken up, and each working member of the community, instead of scampering off alone, seizes a larva and carries it as rapidly as possible to the nearest refuge, is it to preserve his individual life or the life of the community, that he is lading himself so heavily and running so fast? Is the bear "robbed of her whelps in the field" shrewdly calculating the chances of personal gain in madly following the captor? Is the mother bird thinking of her own personal interests when she feigns a broken wing, inviting pursuit, while her young are hiding? And have we not here a foreshadowing of the loveliest of all human relations — of that disinterested motherhood without which our race could not have been? Or, friendship—is it after all a deceit? The joy of Jona-

than, the heir to the throne of Israel, as he clave unto David, the people's favorite—was it the gratification of a subtle and deep-seated selfishness? Is "In Memoriam" an essential falsity? When conscience is resolved into utility, thought into sensation, and mind into brain, when all the radically distinct elements in the rich and mysterious unity of our nature are set forth as one and the same, and we are satisfactorily shown to be what we know ourselves not to be, then may love be explained as the mask under which the hard-lined features of self-seeking have somehow learned to hide their ugliness. The attempt is vain. All such speculative reconstructions of the soul must go to pieces against the tranquil rock of *that which is.*

But how shall we be made to love as we ought? How shall the sweet prophecy of the natural affections be fulfilled in the law of Christ? Only through the knowledge of the Cross. It is by the touch of God's holy and infinite love in the Divine Sacrifice that our hearts are quickened unto their highest responsive devotion. For the Father's gift of the Son was the gift of himself—the self-giving of God to obtain eternal redemption for us. Not in vain was it foretold by priest and prophet. The faint and imperfect foreshadowing of the sacrifices for the putting away of Levitical impurities found a far deeper fulfillment than our thinking is able to reach, in Him who was "manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." The words which the prophets were taught and emboldened to utter, not only concerning the righteous judgments of Jehovah, but also concerning his compassion and loving-kindness (Isa. lxiii. 9, 16; lxvi. 13; Hos. xi. 8; Psa. lxiii. 7)—every such word was filled with meaning by the cross of Jesus.

It is this that kindles the enthusiasm of Christian obedience and service. The law is good, but it cannot make the sinner good; it can only show his lack of goodness, and make his sin appear, as it is, exceeding sinful. We are saved through faith and into love—faith the surrender of heart and will at the cross, love the new life of Christly devotion that is there begun. Will our sin appear any less heinous and condemnable in the light of the Divine Sacrifice? On the contrary, its heinousness and guilt will be made more manifest. For it is in this light that we first truly see against whom we have sinned, and what our sin has wrought. But the means of its complete exposure will be the means of its overthrow. The cross will be its destruction. Whoever shall personally know and receive this love of God in Christ, his sinful selfishness will be wounded unto death, and the true man of the heart will be raised up in him.

Paul speaks of this new birth, therefore, as a crucifixion and resurrection with Christ; and he bids us present ourselves unto God "as alive from the dead." Devotedly earnest, we may believe, would be the life of a man who, having died, had been raised up even into this world. Such an experience has sometimes been felt by those who have been brought back from the verge of the grave. Said King Hezekiah, when recovered from a sickness that he had expected to prove mortal: "I will go softly all my years." Said John Summerfield, on his deathbed: "How I would preach, if I were raised up! I would preach as I never did before. I have had a look into eternity." Suppose now it were a resurrection into the heavenly world: that would indeed be followed by a life of love and service. But we have been raised up, says the apostle, into a new and higher sphere,

even as Christ was raised into a life, not again of the flesh, but of celestial glory. We have entered the world of spiritual resurrection, where the will of God is everywhere writ large as the supreme and rightful law of our being. We live in the kingdom of heaven, where it is the ruling aim that we shall be "*holy* and without blemish before Him in *love*."

No better example than that of Paul himself has ever been given. I have heard it asked somewhat impatiently, "I wonder when the preachers will quit talking about Paul?" Doubtless it will be a long time in the future; for the great apostle was first of all the great Christian. It helps our striving to follow Christ, when we learn how this man, our strong human-hearted brother, followed him. Paul seems to have foreseen the hope and encouragement that would come to others, even in future generations, from the example of God's effectual grace in him (1 Tim. i. 16). Certain it is that never before or since has the transforming power of God's love shone brighter in a human personality. Nothing could break him down—not shipwreck, nor beating with rods, nor cruel derision, nor loneliness, nor anxiety for all the struggling and imperiled churches. But his iron strength of purpose had its equal in tenderness of heart for his friends, and in passionate sympathy not only with brother Israelites, his kinsmen according to the flesh, but with the nations of all the earth in their sin and suffering—

> Desperate tides of a whole world's great anguish
> Forced through the channels of a single soul.

Paul had not made acquaintance with his Lord after the flesh. The Man of Galilee, the Master as he ap-

peared to the Twelve, teaching and healing, was unknown to the young disciple of Gamaliel. To him the great epiphany came not out of Galilee, but directly out of heaven; and not after a preliminary course of training through the words and life of Jesus, but after a hot-headed career of ignorance and unbelief. First of all, it was the ascended and glorified Christ before whom Paul bowed the knee. Nevertheless Peter and John, who had companied with Jesus from the beginning, preached no other gospel than that of the Apostle to the Gentiles. Theirs, like his, was the gospel of the Cross and the Resurrection (1 Pet. i. 3, 4; ii. 24; 1 John i.; iv. 9, 10, 14). The same word of life has been the substance of Christian preaching from then till now. Without it, whatever sound ethical and theistic teaching may be offered, and with whatever earnestness or genius or learning, there is no ministry of reconciliation. Here is our message, simple, sublime, heart-subduing: "It is Christ Jesus that died, yea, rather, that was raised from the dead." For in him "we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins: who is the image of the invisible God." In him we know God as Father; in him we find our brother man, sinful and unworthy, but of priceless worth. Therefore in Christ are we saved from the power of sin, and led into the whole-hearted love of God and our neighbor.

The enthronement of love is for the perfecting and endless enriching of the soul.

It will give *joy*. There is a joyousness that arises from temperament, from the fulfillment of any cherished hope, or even from exuberant bodily health. It is one of God's good gifts to men. Be glad and rejoice as do the singing birds and the little children in our

homes, out of abounding natural life. Nevertheless we are not singing birds or little children; and ours must be distinctively the joy of conscience and of loving service. It may persist in spite of all adverse conditions of temperament, health, and outward circumstance. Its song of praise may resound from the innermost prison and the stocks, out of the blackest midnight of life. Its thrilling note shall be heard in all our preaching; "and your joy no one taketh away from you" (2 Cor. i. 12; 1 Pet. i. 8).

It will give *courage*. In times of religious crisis or revolution, heroes only are wanted—an Elijah, a Stephen, a Wyclif, an "old Hugh Latimer." Such a character as Erasmus, with his honest but pitiful "We have not all strength for martyrdom," seems painfully out of place, notwithstanding the brilliant and invaluable service of his intellect, in the stormy days of the Protestant Reformation. But in fact the heroic age of the Church is now, because it is always. In our time, indeed, since the psalm of religious peace has long been heard in the land, a man may keep up the show of respectability in the Christian ministry and have in him all the while the spirit of moral cowardice. But such is no more the spirit of Christ's true witnesses now than it was in the first or the sixteenth century. Still may we hear the Master's startling inquiry, "Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink? or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" And though we may still lightly answer, We are able, yet to make our word good we shall have to follow him to Calvary. To count reputation, ease, office, all earthly treasure, as nothing for Christ's sake, to tell the truth and live no lie—this is to be ready to say in the circumstances of our time, "Even as we

have been approved of God to be intrusted with the gospel, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God who proveth our hearts."

Now to be morally courageous is to control by some higher principle the fear of losing a lower good. The soldier, for example, has the same fear of losing life as any other man; but some worthier motive—honor, patriotism, obedience—brings this instinctive fear under control, and it is thus that he becomes a true soldier and a brave man. Should we not expect, then, that the highest type of courage will be produced through the control of all lower fears by the very highest principles of action? It cannot be otherwise. The holiest choice is at the same time the most heroic. To do right simply and uncompromisingly in all things, is to be braver than any patriot fighting the battles of his country. Really to love our fellow-men—not merely to be good-natured and mannerly—to reverence their humanity and seek with a single eye to do them good, will set us above both frowns and flatteries as no lower motive could ever do. We are told that one of Wesley's hearers in America objected to his sermon from 1 John v. 5, on the ground that "if this is Christianity, a man must have more courage than Alexander the Great." What grade of courage, then, may we suppose to be sufficient for the formation of Christian character?

Still again, the spirit of love is a spirit of *power*. Conscience is powerful. Put that into your speech, and it will win the hearer's confidence, and reach unto the conscience that is in him. Nevertheless it takes but a little while to learn that as a friend it is not enough even to be conscientious; that as a counselor any advice that one may give without tenderness and sympathy is

likely to be rejected; that as a pastor the measure of one's genuine interest in individuals will be the measure of his success. Job's comforters failed not so much from lack of truth as from lack of kindness: their spirit was irritating rather than healing. The preacher is a friend, a counselor, a pastor in the pulpit. Will it suffice, then, for him to possess adequate gifts, and to do his duty in the spirit of duty? No. Let him covet earnestly the best gifts, and follow the right whithersoever it may lead; but if he would speak the word of power, it must needs be spoken in sympathy and sincerity of love.

This will make him a master whom loyal spirits will be glad to obey, a leader whom they will enthusiastically follow. Should he rise to the highest places of responsibility and authority, should he become a bishop in the Church of God, to direct and govern—even to make appointments to fields of labor—his authority will be accepted with a song of joy. Let his followers feel that he sends them into no difficulty or hardship that he would not cheerfully share, and they will be followers indeed. Newman Hall, in his "Autobiography," tells of a prayer offered for him by a decrepit old workman in an almshouse that he was visiting: "If Thou make him useful, Thou wilt give him trials; but it's gran' cross-bearin' when it's tied on wi' love." When we know the love of God, his commands are not grievous though they put us on the way of the cross. So likewise with the rightful commands of the servants of God, when the heart speaks through them all.

Shall we, then, withdraw the statement, that a man acting wholly under the power of moral love and a man acting wholly under the power of conscience would take

the same line of conduct? By no means; but let us add the statement, that it makes a great difference whether the *spirit* in which an act is done be that of love or that of conscience. It is certain that the subject of the act will be very differently affected in the two cases. There is a matchless tone and touch in the ministrations of love. Duty is the acknowledgment of a law; love is devotion to a person. We pay the man that has done us a conscientious service, and let him go. But suppose it should be a friend—or, as the word means, *lover*—that has done the service: is it the same? Though every outward act should be precisely what an enlightened sense of duty would enjoin—is it just the same? When will you pay your friend and let him go? It is not a calculable service that he has offered, it is *himself;* and it is to yourself, and to nothing that you have, that his appeal is made. In like manner, it is only as a friend and brother of men that any one can hope to minister the word of the cross with its own rightful power.

PART FIRST

IN THE DIVINE SUCCESSION

"With a dim presentiment of what is coming, with hearts which throb and swell under the excitement of expectation, and heaving with wondering thoughts of the great things about to be revealed, they sit there in the upper room for ten long days, and wait for the promise of the Father."—BRUCE, *The Training of the Twelve.*

"If some turn to what is called the 'Broad School,' may it not be because evangelical preachers have not been showing how the gospel touches all that is human, and gives to common life a tenderness and beauty and meaning which broad-church doctrine has not in itself? If others are turning to confessionals and spiritual directions and the corporeal presence of Christ in the sacraments, is it not because we have not shown clearly and warmly enough the humanity of Christ brought close as a guide and a friend, always and everywhere?"—KER, *The History of Preaching.*

"God called me to preach, and I went."—JOSHUA SOULE.

"And then on one memorable day, whose almost every cloud I remember, whose high sun and glowing firmament and waving trees are vivid yet, there rose before me, as if an angel had descended, a revelation of Christ as being God, because he knew how to love a sinner. . . . I bowed down in my soul, and from that hour to this it has been my very life to love and to serve the all-helping and pitying God. Well, that determined me to preach."—H. W. BEECHER.

I

The New Testament Idea

What is it to be a Christian preacher? To the ministry of the gospel as we know it belong various functions—the government of the Church, the administration of sacraments, the conduct of worship, pastoral care, leadership in religious work and enterprise. But none of these come within the range of our present inquiry. We are to study the minister simply as *preacher*.

To begin at the beginning, let us lay aside, as far as possible, whatever ideas we may have associated with the word, and learn its meaning afresh from the New Testament.

At once we shall be impressed with the fact that, both historically and in point of importance, preaching appears as the first of ministerial functions. It was for the doing of this work that Jesus called certain chosen disciples to be apostles (Luke vi. 13). "And he sent them forth to preach the kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 2). "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark xvi. 15). Also, when the ascended Christ was revealed in the Spirit to Saul of Tarsus, his word was, "To this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee" (Acts xxvi. 16). It was the original ministerial office *to preach*.

Of the greatness of this ministry we have a most significant proof in the proportionate amount of time that Jesus gave to the training of the men who were to be in-

trusted with it. When he "appointed" (the word means *made*) the Twelve to their apostleship, it was distinctly "that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach" (Mark iii. 14). And with him they were, in close and unbroken intercourse, unto the end. Day by day he taught them. After speaking in parables to the people, "privately to his disciples he expounded all things" (Mark iv. 34). He bore patiently with their slowness of perception and lack of love. Was any miracle wrought save in their presence? They were members of his household (Luke xxii. 8; John xiii. 1); they saw him in prayer (Luke ix. 18; xi. 1); they heard his very words to the Father (Matt. xi. 25, 26); when he steadfastly set his face to go unto his death at Jerusalem, they followed him, amazed and afraid (Mark x. 32). Even in Gethsemane he would not have them far away (Matt. xxvi. 36-46). Jesus, indeed, denied himself to none: he had compassion on the multitude; he was no respecter of persons; he tasted death for every man. But to whom was it given to know the daily presence of the Incarnate Word, the full shining out of his character, the continuous power of his personality? This was the peculiar portion of the men whom he was fitting to be his chief witness-bearers to the world. Verily "the life was manifested" to them as it was not manifested to others, "the eternal life which was with the Father" (1 John i. 2). We could ask no surer sign of the transcendent importance of the work whereunto they were *made*.

In the Pauline Epistles likewise the greatness of Christian preaching is abundantly shown. The apostle declares that he was sent not to baptize but to preach the gospel (1 Cor. i. 17); that after his call and conse-

cration to this work, he went into Arabia and awaited in retirement the time to go forth with so momentous a message (Gal. i. 17, 18); that the God of creative power himself illumines the hearts of those who preach not themselves but Jesus as Lord, "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. iv. 5, 6); that it is God's pleasure that through the foolishness of preaching they that believe shall be saved (1 Cor. i. 21). "How shall they believe," he asks, "in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. x. 14); overwhelmed with the glory and awfulness of that word which is a savor of life or of death, he cries out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. ii. 16); as his last hour approaches he charges the well-beloved Timothy to "preach the word," and "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. iv. 2, 5).

In the book of Acts the same truth is exemplified in the preaching itself. For by this means it was that the word of God made its way everywhere and prevailed. Note the power of it as proclaimed by its first ministers —by Peter (Acts ii. 40, 41; iv. 4; x. 43, 44), by Stephen (Acts vi. 9, 10), by Philip (Acts viii. 5-8). Upon the lips of the Apostle to the Gentiles and his associates the living word was borne to the peoples of Europe; and in Philippi, in Thessalonica, in Corinth it created the Christian churches to which their chief pastor, during his absence from them, ministered that written gospel which has come down to our day (Acts xvi. 40; xvii. 2-4; xviii. 18). From Jerusalem and round about even unto Illyricum, over land and sea, through Asia and Europe, stretched the far-reaching circuit on which, "in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the

Holy Ghost," he "fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Rom. xv. 19).

Is the work of the preacher, then, essentially different from that of other Christian men? is he intrusted with a message and clothed with a power unshared by them? If so, the New Testament churches seem to have known nothing of it. In their congregations anybody to whom a word of the Lord came was not only authorized, but was put under obligation, to declare it (1 Cor. xiv. 1, 5, 26; 1 Thess. v. 19, 20). The fire of Pentecost rested upon the whole company of disciples, and in this the apostle Peter saw a fulfillment of the ancient prophecy, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Acts ii. 17). The ministry of preaching was a ministry of gifts and not of orders (Rom. xii. 6). A church, indeed, must be organized. Without some government and differentiation of functions, it could hardly exist. Hence from the beginning ecclesiastical offices arose. The first was the general "care of all the churches," which was fulfilled by the apostles.[1] Certain men, also, in the

[1] "There is, indeed, as we have seen, no trace in Scripture of a formal commission of authority for government from Christ himself. Their [the apostles'] commission was to be witnesses of himself, and to bear that witness by preaching and by healing. But it is inconceivable that the moral authority with which they were thus clothed, and the uniqueness of their position and personal qualifications, should not in all these years have been accumulating upon them by the spontaneous homage of the Christians of Judea an ill-defined but lofty authority in matters of government and administration. . . . What is not so easy to find out is the extent to which an apostolic authority of this kind is likely to have been felt and acknowledged beyond the limits of the Holy Land." (Hort, "The Christian Ecclesia," p. 84.)

mother church of Jerusalem, were appointed to distribute the funds collected for the relief of the poor (Acts vi. 1-6); and thus the diaconate seems to have begun. Others were appointed, in the churches generally, in accordance with the custom of the synagogues, as rulers of the congregation (Acts xi. 30; xiv. 23); and so the presbyterate appeared. It is not claimed, however, that such appointment to office, or any ceremony by which it might be accompanied, conferred any new power upon the recipient. "Ordination" was simply setting him apart for the special service for which the spiritual gifts already possessed qualified him (Acts vi. 3, 6; Eph. iv. 11; Titus i. 5-9). But as to the preaching of the gospel, we do not find that even such a designation as this was required. If a man who had been ordained a deacon—Stephen or Philip, for example—felt moved to speak the word of God in the congregation, he was at liberty to speak it. So, likewise, with a presbyter (1 Tim. v. 17). So with any Christian (1 Cor. xiv. 1, 5, 26, 31).

Now it is evident that the churches would have to take some supervision of preaching, just as of administrative functions. Otherwise the hour of congregational worship might be occupied to no profit, or even to the subverting of the hearers, by unqualified speakers. There must be discernment of spirits. Thus, in a spiritually enlightened church, the true prophet or teacher, called of God to this ministry, would come to be recognized and accepted as such, and the mouth of the false or incompetent teacher would be stopped (1 Cor. xiv.; Gal. iii. 1-3; iv. 17, 18; Titus i. 9-11; 1 John iv. 1; 2 John ix. 10). But there is no evidence that this recognition was shown in the New Testament churches by even so simple a ceremony as the laying on of hands. It

is true that Paul and Barnabas were set apart, with the laying on of hands, by the prophets and teachers of the church in Antioch, for the missionary work to which they had been called of God; but this was an ordination to a special mission of teaching and preaching among the Gentiles (Acts xiii. 1-4).[1]

What, then, is the New Testament type of the preach-

[1] In "The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles," while laymen are forbidden to take upon themselves the proper offices of the ministry as then constituted, they are never forbidden to preach: "Neither do we permit the laity to perform any of the offices belonging to the priesthood; as, for instance, neither the sacrifice, nor baptism, nor the laying on of hands, nor the blessing, whether the smaller or the greater." (Const. Apost., III. x.)

Even women are not prohibited from speaking the prophetic word: "Now women prophesied also. . . Wherefore if among you also there be a man or a woman, and such a one obtains any gift, let him be humble, that God may be pleased with him." (*Ibid.*, VIII. ii.)

But direct and positive instruction is also given: "Let him that teaches, although he be one of the laity, yet, if he be skillful in the word and grave in his manners, teach; 'for they shall all be taught of God.'" (*Ibid.*, VIII. xxxii.)

This liberty of prophesying was gradually restricted more and more: "The confinement of the speaking (or preaching) to a single individual—the leader—which we see in Justin, is what we find in subsequent generations quite generally established. It becomes in time the prerogative of the bishop to preach, and this prerogative he confers upon his presbyters also (not necessarily, but in most cases), while deacons and laymen are almost everywhere excluded from the right." (Eusebius's "Church History," Schaff and Wace's ed., VI. xix., *footnote*.)

The primitive and New Testament practice is acknowledged more or less practically by most Protestant churches. The chief evangelist of our day, whose work and whose praise are in all the churches, was not ordained nor even licensed to preach.

er? Let us call to mind the various names that he might bear. The most comprehensive statement of them is in Ephesians iv. 11: "And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." An apostle (ἀπόστολος) in the stricter sense, as we have already seen, was a man specially prepared by Jesus and sent forth as a chief witness for him; in the wider sense, the name was given to others whom Christ sent forth as ministers of the word (1 Thess. ii. 2, 6). A prophet (προφητής) (Ex. iv. 16), in the stricter sense, was one who in the name of God foretold events; in the wider sense, one who spoke immediately from God as an interpreter of his mind and will (1 Cor. xiv. 23-33). An evangelist (εὐαγγελιστής) was a bearer of the evangel, or good news, to the unconverted. A teacher (διδάσκαλος) was one who "in the religious assemblies of Christians undertook the work of teaching with the special assistance of the Holy Spirit." He would seem to have differed from the prophet, not as being less an interpreter, but as being moved less by a present divine impulse, or revelation, and as explaining more calmly and fully the Christian truths and precepts.[1] But a man might perform more than one of the functions thus discriminated. He

[1] Luther said frankly and strongly (as he said everything) that Melanchthon was a better teacher than he. And so he was—more serene, broad-minded, and luminous; but he was not more of a prophet: and the two unlike but cordial colaborers exemplify very well in the sixteenth century the difference between prophet and teacher in the first century. Their bodies lie side by side in the castle church of Wittenberg; but it is on the tomb of him who nailed the ninety-five theses to the church door that appropriately the name is inscribed, "*Propheta Germaniæ.*"

might perform them all. Paul, for example, was in an eminent degree apostle, prophet, evangelist, teacher (1 Tim. ii. 7; Rom. viii. 18-22; xv. 20, 21; Acts xiii. 1).

Now in any or all of these forms of activity, with the gifts that qualified for them, appeared that herald (κήρυξ) of the gospel, who was known as the preacher (Rom. xvi. 25, 26; 1 Cor. xv. 14; Matt. xxiv. 14; 1 Cor. ii. 4; Acts xv. 21; Rom. ii. 21; 1 Tim. ii. 7). Who, then, was he? *A man of God sent forth to tell and to interpret in living speech the facts of the Christian revelation.*

The facts of creation and universal providence have ever borne witness to the Father of spirits and Maker of the heavens and the earth. "He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons" (Acts xiv. 17). Moreover, in the history both of nations and of individuals, his hand appears in guidance and in retribution. Unconsciously for the most part, men are contributing to an ever-increasing Purpose that is far above them. "Howbeit he meaneth not so," was the word of Jehovah concerning Assyria, the heathen world-power that he himself was sending in judgment against Israel—"neither doth his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy"; just as a century and a half afterwards the word to Cyrus, the divinely appointed deliverer of Israel, was, "I have surnamed thee"—with the title of *anointed*—"though thou hast not known me. . . . I will gird thee though thou hast not known me" (Isa. x. 7; xlv. 4, 5).

The revelation given to the people of Israel was also to enlighten the Gentiles. In Israel was God known—through the great events of its history interpreted by

the inward word in the heart of its prophets—as nowhere else on earth; salvation was of the Jews; and the Jews were elect for the world's sake.

But all that went before, though full of value in itself, was preliminary to the Christian revelation. In the facts of the life, death, and glorification of Jesus is the very brightness of God's glory, his crowning self-revelation to mankind. Observe, we are not here dealing with speculations or abstractions, nor with truths intuitively known, but with events. Jesus of Nazareth lived upon earth, an historic Person. We date our years from the time of his birth. His life was a genuine human life, and yet unparalleled, unclassifiable. He taught the highest spiritual truth. He went about, in unceasing love and kindness, doing good. He declared the just judgments of God against the sinner. He wrought miracles of power and grace. He offered himself to men as the Anointed of God to be the one Lord and Saviour. He said that to know him was to know the Father; that to receive him was to be saved from sin; that by his word men were to be judged both now and hereafter. He was rejected by his own countrymen and put to death on the cross, under the authority of Pilate the Roman governor. He rose from the dead, and appeared again to his disciples, on various occasions, for the space of forty days.

What is the inner meaning of these facts—the spoken words, the deeds, the life, the cross of Jesus? At first it was ill understood by all. Even his chosen companions were slow to receive it; but when the Light did shine unto them, they went out and bore witness far and wide. This Jesus that had been crucified, they proclaimed, was made both Lord and Christ; the cross had been not his

defeat but his perfecting; in his name was remission of sins (Acts ii. 36, 38). That was the significance of what they had seen and heard and looked upon and handled; and now they publish it unto all. It is their evangel; it is what has made them preachers of Christ.

Now these Christian facts, together with the true interpretation of them, have been written down. They are ever before us in the New Testament. By the Spirit of truth it was put into the hearts of apostolic men to make this indispensable record. But this was not preaching. It is the spoken word in which the gospel is preached; and chiefly by this means has the message of salvation been conveyed to the world. Why should it be so? Is the tongue simply a more convenient pen—one that everybody owns, and knows how to use? Is the difference between the two merely external and incidental? It is a much deeper difference. Which do you prefer, that your friend shall write or shall speak to you? Why is it better to hear his voice than to see his handwriting? Writing is an art devised by the wit of man, as a substitute where speech is impossible. The perfect word is a spoken word. Speech means personal presence; more than that, personal presence in completest self-expression. Words rightly understood are the most significant of deeds. Is it not on this account that our Lord has said, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," and that his servant and apostle James has taught that "if any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also"? The speech of a lifetime—not the bare articulate utterance, but with it the telltale tone—flowing forth for the most part without distinct deliberation, incited by occasions, incapable of recall, is it not

indeed the story of the inmost life and character? is it not the bearer of the soul itself out upon the human world?

Therefore, when the gospel is spoken it avails itself of the alliance of the keenest human interest and persuasiveness. It reaches men through a brother man all tremulous with life, in the fullest and most penetrative act of expression, face to face, man to man.

Still, preaching is not a question of oratory. It does not imply appreciative audiences in a large and well-appointed audience room, pleasant and desirable as these may be. The New Testament idea is that of a soul in which is the revealing word of God, speaking with the gift of utterance, under any circumstances, to one or more other souls. Jesus preached in the Temple courts, in the synagogue, in the dwelling house, in the open air; now to the multitude, now to the single hearer. Walking along the road with two untaught and bewildered disciples, he turned their sadness into a new, strange joy with the truth of the Christ's enthronement through suffering: "Was not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke xxiv. 32.) Immediately after Philip had preached Christ in Samaria, where "the multitude gave heed with one accord to the things that were spoken," he found his way to the chariot of Queen Candace's treasurer, in southern Judea, and beginning at the same scripture where this lone seeker of God was reading, he "preached unto him Jesus" (Acts viii. 35).

Now it is certain that we ought not to cultivate a "preaching tone" in conversation—or in the pulpit either, for that matter; and yet it is no less certain that we may truly preach Christ, perhaps in very few

words, anywhere and to anybody. Spare no pains to gather the great congregation; but the rainy Sunday, the schoolhouse meeting, the talk by the wayside or by the fireside—these too may prove the glad occasions of quickening a soul with that "word of God which liveth and abideth forever."

Another question arises in the study that we are making: On what conditions was the New Testament preacher able to receive and deliver his message? He must be taught immediately from God. Though he had witnessed with eye and ear and hand the Divine Facts themselves, he was not thereby prepared to proclaim them. To see is not to perceive, to hear is not to understand. There is much seeing, but little insight. Jesus' own training of the Twelve did not make them preachers. Think of Simon Peter preaching Christ even after the great confession, so long as it was in his mind to prevent, by all possible means, the death upon the cross (Matt. xvi. 21-23). What sort of Christ would he have preached? Think of the two disciples whom the risen Lord accompanied on their way to Emmaus preaching Jesus, with the thought shadowing all the faith and joy of their minds, that inasmuch as he had been put to death it was unbelievable that he should be the Redeemer (Luke xxiv. 20, 21). Think of any of the apostles preaching Jesus even on their way from the Mount of Ascension, where they asked as their last inquiry, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6). It is true that he had sent them forth already on a temporary mission (Matt. x. 5-8), just as he had sent "other seventy also" (Luke x. 1), partly as a second John the Forerunner to prepare the way of the Lord. But it was only a partial and

preliminary gospel that they were then empowered to proclaim. To have Jesus himself with them—to "be with him"—was not enough to make them interpreters of his acts and his Person. He must go away and come again; withdrawn from their senses, he must draw inwardly near and abide by the Spirit in their hearts (John xiv. 23). So there was given them through Jesus the promise of the Father, which was the fullness of the Spirit's teaching and power (Acts i. 4).

For although that Spirit had been from the beginning in the world—is he not *God in us?*—yet never before had there been any such words for him to interpret as the words of Jesus; nor any such works, nor any such life, nor any such death and victory over death, as were shown in the Son of man. But after the facts of redemption had been wrought, it was these facts that the Spirit could take, as could not have been done before, and fill them with illumining and cleansing power. "He shall glorify me."

Therefore when Jesus, at his final leave-taking of the Eleven, commissioned them to herald the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth, he did not permit them to go forth at once. They did not yet know the meaning of what they had seen and heard even since the resurrection. But then came Pentecost; and from that day forth they did know the meaning of these things, and were interpretative witnesses of them.

Centuries before, the heart of a psalmist was overswept with doubts of the righteousness and the providence of God. But it would not do to publish his doubts; for he might thereby lay a stumbling-block in the way of some sincere and struggling soul: "If I said I will speak thus, behold, I had dealt treacherously with

the generation of thy children" (Psa. lxxiii. 15). It was a time for silence. But afterwards, in waiting upon God, he found the time for speech. The true vision of the Eternal appeared. He saw that the persistent sinner must be overthrown, and the righteous man guided by God's own counsel and crowned at last with glory, and that God himself is the portion of his children (vv. 25, 26). Now he could bear testimony, now he could preach, now he could write his glorious Psalm: "That I may *tell of all thy works*" (v. 28).

So it was, only in far fuller measure, with the apostles at Pentecost. That power which their Lord had conferred upon them in prophecy and symbol now became theirs in actual realization (Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18; John xx. 21-23). They saw the path of salvation through faith in the crucified and risen Lord, like a line of heavenly light. They could declare with divine certitude and authority the word of forgiveness and of condemnation, the opening and shutting door. They did declare it in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, thus and not otherwise condemning the sinner and saving the repentant soul. Their word was God's word, and their work was ratified on high.

Must it not ever be so? Christian preaching can be done only in the light and power of the Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 12-16). May the inspired words in which this truth is affirmed never degenerate on our lips into catchwords and cant.

Furthermore, we note, in our study of the Christian Scriptures, that the relation is most vital between this illuminative presence of the Spirit and the preacher's own spiritual character. Each is conditioned on the other. We may find an illustration in the way in which

thought and language are related in intellectual development. Thought is first, else no need of language would be felt. There must be something to express before means of expression will be sought. But this initial thinking can go on to achievement and perfection only through the coöperation of words. In like manner, the Holy Spirit must enlighten the soul first; that is the initial condition; then the soul can see its way to the Cross and find its Father God. But it is only through our walking in this same divine light that the light will grow and increase unto the perfect day; it is only through obedience that the guidance "into all the truth" will be realized. It must be so; because, according to the very law of the mind, we cannot be made to know Christ except as we become like him. Let us not imagine that somehow we can receive the revealing light of heaven upon the written word, and have it set aflame our pulpit speech, irrespective of what manner of men we are. Only through the Spirit's teaching may we become disciples of Jesus; but it is equally true that only through continuing to be disciples of Jesus may we become pupils of the Spirit indeed. It is through what we are—or are becoming—and in no other way, that we can be made to understand the things of God.

Did not Jesus so teach in that same wondrous discourse, in the upper room, in which the promise of the Spirit was given? "If ye *love me,* ye will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you . . . the Spirit of *truth.*" "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that *loveth me;* . . . and I will love him and *manifest myself unto him.*" "If a man *love me, he will keep my word;* and my Father will love him, and we

will come unto him, and *make our abode with him.*" (John xiv. 15-23.) What, then, is this truth that is received through love? It is the truth of love, the truth of God, the truth which Christ *is*. The apostle, also, who records these words of Jesus states the same principle of spiritual enlightenment in the great announcement: "Every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John iv. 7, 8). In brief, what is our gospel? Do we not have it in what God himself is toward men? God the Father, the Saviour, the Spirit—to know him is to know the Christian good news. How, then, may we so interpret the written gospel as to get this knowledge which we are sent to communicate to men? Only through becoming like Him. But his nature is holy love; therefore, only through becoming holy in love.

Accordingly we find that Jesus' training of the Twelve to be his witnessing preachers was interblended, from first to last, with his training of them in personal character. It is impossible to separate the two. Did he tell them truth in the ear, that they might proclaim it from the housetops (Luke xii. 3)? Did he choose them to be with him that he "might send them forth to preach," as witnesses of what they had come to know (Luke xxiv. 48)? He was also ever teaching and inspiring them, in all the gentleness and wisdom and inexorableness of love, to be sincere (Luke vi. 41, 42), to have faith in God (Mark xi. 22-24), to be prayerful (Luke xi. 1-10), to be self-denying (Matt. xvi. 24), to avoid giving unnecessary offense (Matt. xvii. 27), to be forgiving (Matt. xviii. 21, 22), to be kind and helpful (John xiii. 1-17), to be large-minded (Luke ix. 49, 50),

to rejoice not in the exertion of miraculous power but in personal acceptance with God (Luke x. 20), to be child-like (Matt. xviii. 3), to be all that it is given men to become, to love and be perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect (Matt. v. 48). The idea that it might be possible for them, without having some such spirit and character in themselves, to testify his gospel, does not once appear. So the making of a preacher, in the New Testament, is first of all and continuous through all the making of a man.

If therefore the inner truth of the Christian facts is seen—if *Christ is known*—through the teaching of the Spirit in personal experience, what follows? That the preacher, even unto the end of this Messianic age, is a witness, and the gospel a testimony (Luke xxiv. 48; Acts i. 8; v. 32; xxvi. 16; 1 John, *passim*).

One expression of this spirit of witness-bearing, as it appears in the New Testament, is freedom and boldness of speech. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with *boldness*" (Acts iv. 31); "When they beheld the *boldness* of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled" (Acts iv. 13); "We waxed *bold* in our God to speak unto you the gospel of our God in much conflict" (1 Thess. ii. 2); "Great is my *boldness* of speech toward you" (2 Cor. vii. 4); "That utterance may be given unto me," says Paul again, asking the prayers of the church, "in opening my mouth to make known with *boldness* the mystery of the gospel, . . . that in it I may speak *boldly* as I ought to speak" (Eph. vi. 19, 20). The word (παρρησία) means *all-speaking, telling every word* (πᾶν, ῥῆσις). It is the antonym of timidity, hesitation, uncertainty, reserve. It is well

represented by Martin Luther's, *Stand up cheerily, speak up manfully*—as well as by his own conspicuous example. Is it not a necessary trait of any man who would be a master of assemblies? Eloquence is outspokenness. Not rudeness, or violence, or impertinence—far from it—not loudness, but full, free, self-forgetful speech. Whence comes it? From conviction and experience. It is a sign of personal assurance. In the preacher it is the testifying voice of the constant and conscious Christ-spirit, the divine truth of life, within.

II

The Perversion of the Idea: The Priest

It may be that we have sometimes entered a Christian church and looked in painful wonder at an altar with the priest standing before it in the act of offering sacrifice. Over a large part of the world, both within and outside the limits of Christendom, the same scene may be witnessed from day to day. Images, candles, incense, and gorgeous vestments, each with a symbolic meaning, add to the spectacular effect; but the central object of interest is the sacrificial oblation. On inquiry we shall be told that the bread and wine upon the altar are changed, through certain words of consecration, into the actual body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, which are then and there offered by the priest as "a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead."

Now this priestly office represents a long and tragic history. How long? We have met with no trace or semblance of it in the New Testament. Nevertheless if we say that it is not to be found there, the curse of the most powerful of the communions that confess it, has been pronounced upon us.[1] But the exegetical argument at least with which so fearful an anathema is supported can hardly be said to deserve serious atten-

[1] If any one denieth that in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist are contained, truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ, but saith that he is only therein as a sign, or in figure, or virtue; let him be anathema." ("Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent.")

tion. To tell the reader of the New Testament, for example, that Saul and the other prophets and teachers in Antioch were *offering sacrifice* when the Holy Spirit said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts xiii. 1, 2)—as Cardinal Gibbons would have us believe; or that "St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, frequently alludes to the sacrifice of the mass" ("Faith of Our Fathers," c. 22), is to trifle with human intelligence. Many are the names by which the minister of Christ is known in the New Testament, but the one name by which, according to the theory and practice of the sacerdotal churches, he ought to be commonly known, is not there. Many are the forms of service ascribed to him, but the sacrificial function, as one of them, is neither mentioned nor even remotely implied.[1]

[1] "Surely, if the Lord's Supper were actually a mass, and if the Christian ministry were really a priesthood, entitled and empowered to offer 'oftentimes' the same sacrifice, such powers and such a performance would almost absorb the attention of the New Testament writers; it would be felt to be so all-important that everything else would fall into a subordinate place." ("The Evangelical Succession," Fernley Lectures for 1899, by Thomas F. Lockyer, B.A.)

"They are called stewards or messengers of God, servants or ministers of the Church, and the like; but the sacerdotal title is never once conferred upon them. The only priests under the gospel, designated as such in the New Testament, are the saints, members of the Christian brotherhood." (Lightfoot, "The Christian Ministry," p. 12.)

The following is the argument by which Professor William Jones Seabury, of the General Theological Seminary, New York, endeavors to show that the Person who is responsible for the exercise of the priestly function in the Christian ministry is our Lord himself: "That this action of our Lord [the institution of the Lord's Supper] was properly sacrificial is

Under the old covenant, the priest, whose office it was to offer typical sacrifices, as an educational discipline, till all should be fulfilled in the one Sacrifice upon Calvary, was also indeed the guardian and teacher of the law (Lev. x. 11; Deut. xxxiii. 10; 2 Chron. xv. 3); but of *preaching* he seems to have done little or none. The prophet was the preacher. The sacrifice of the mass, it is claimed, is neither typical nor merely commemorative, but real; it is "identical with that of the cross," the only difference consisting "in the manner of the oblation" ("Faith of Our Fathers," c. 22). Moreover, its effect upon those who receive it in the Eucharist is to impart the grace of God, independently of any present spiritual apprehension on the part of either the ad-

indicated (1) by the conformity of it to the precedent type of the Passover which he was then fulfilling, as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and prefigured by the Mosaic sacrifice; (2) by the terms of the time present which he uses in performance of the action, saying, 'My body which is given for you; my blood which is shed for you'; and (3) by the voluntary character which he himself attributed to the devotion of his life to that end for which he had assumed it, saying, 'I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again'—all the subsequent proceedings upon the cross resulting in his death having been involuntary, and by the violence of others, which he passively endured. And since the apostles in that action received the commission to do in commemoration of him those acts which he then did, if his action was sacrificial, that function which he then committed to them was also sacrificial, and by the like necessity implies the reception by them of the power to execute the priestly office." ("Introduction to the Study of Ecclesiastical Polity," pp. 68, 69.)

Only the exigencies of a theory can account for such exegesis on so serious a subject.

ministrator or the recipient. Supposing now a minister of religion to be sent forth, under the authority of his Church, charged with the two duties of instructing and persuading men through preaching Christ, and of making them Christians by the conveyance of sacramental grace, what sort of relation between the two will his ministry be likely to maintain? Indeed, with such a faith as he must hold, it will be impossible truly and fully to preach Christ; but apart from this fact, the ministration which is the more available and the less exacting, and which he believes to be by far the more effective, will partly or completely usurp the place of the other. Thus far, at any rate, through the long and varied history of the Christian ministry, it has proved to be so.

I must ask you to note a few points in the historic origin and growth of sacerdotalism. It appears hand in hand with sacramentalism. Especially close is its connection with the materialistic idea of the Lord's Supper. This sacred rite was observed in the primitive Church, according to its true significance, as a memorial and sacrament—an outward sign of the atoning passion and death of Jesus. But a tendency very soon developed to identify the symbol with that which it symbolized. We find such a tendency not only in the warm emotional language of the early liturgies, whose poetry must not be chilled into logic, but also in the writings of the early—though not of the very earliest—fathers. Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, and Irenæus, who may be taken to represent respectively the beginning, the middle, and the close of the second century, speak sometimes of the sacramental bread and wine as themselves, in some mystic and indefinable sense, the body

and blood of Christ, with power to immortalize the communicant's body no less than to nourish his soul.[1] On the other hand, later and more prominent theologians, such as Tertullian (died 230 c.), and the great Augustine (d. 430), refer to the eucharistic elements as signs, or types, of the Saviour.[2] But the materialistic idea

[1] "They [heretics] abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Ignatius, "To the Smyrnæans," c. 7.)

"Breaking one and the same bread, which is the medicine of immortality, and the antidote to prevent us from dying, but [which causes] that we should live forever in Jesus Christ." (*Ibid.*, "To the Ephesians," c. 20.)

"In like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of his word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh." (Justin Martyr, "First Apology," c. 66.)

"For as the bread which is produced by the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity." (Irenæus, "Against Heresies," IV. c. 18.)

[2] "Then, having taken the bread and given it to his disciples, he made it his body, by saying, 'This is my body,' that is, the figure of my body." (Tertullian, "Against Marcion," IV. 40.)

But on the other hand, in his treatise "On the Resurrection of the Flesh," c. 8, Tertullian says, "The flesh feeds on the body and blood of Christ."

"In that he admitted him [Judas] to the Supper in which he committed and delivered to his disciples the figure of his body and blood." (Augustine, "Expositions of the Psalms," Psa. iii. 1.)

gained ground, and, in the course of a few generations, prevailed.

Again, the bread and wine for the Supper—which were not distributed originally in the minute quantities with which we are familiar—were brought to the place of worship by the people themselves, as an offering to the Lord for the service of his Church. It was *their* oblation. If the minister, or presiding brother, offered prayer and thanksgiving, he was acting as the mouthpiece of the people. It was also a special occasion for the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving (from which the name *Eucharist* was derived), and for self-consecration to God.[1] Hence it was called an offering, or sacrifice (*προσφορά, θυσία, sacrificium*)—just as the congregation's weekly gifts in some churches of the present day are called the offertory. But the converted heathen, who composed the larger part of the membership, were accustomed to the practice of offering propitiatory sacrifices. Not unnaturally they looked for something of the same kind in the new religion. So, as the idea—or, perhaps more correctly, the imaginative feeling—that the consecrated bread and wine were somehow the veritable body and blood of Christ, took possession of the Church, it was met by the idea of a propitiatory sacrifice, and the two coalesced into one: the communion table became an altar, and upon it lay the Divine Victim, in his broken body and shed blood.

[1] Cf. the Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper: "We earnestly desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. . . . And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and our bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee."

Still again, there was a tendency to separate the minister, especially if he were a bishop or a presbyter, more and more from the people. He began to be conceived of, after the manner of the heathen cults and the Jewish temple, as belonging to an order, or indispensable caste, of direct Divine appointment, whose duties and powers no other could without sacrilege attempt to share. About the close of the second century he was called by the name which the heathen priests bore (*sacerdos*), and this soon became his ordinary title. Not as in the New Testament, or in the *Didaché* and other early Christian writings; not apostle, or prophet, or teacher, or evangelist, or preacher; but *priest*. Ordination, no longer a simple recognition by the Church of a divine qualification and call that were believed to have been already given, became a sacrament through which the grace necessary to perform the functions of the office was conferred. But how did the ordaining priest—who must also be a bishop—come by his unparalleled power and authority? It came to him through his own ordination; and so on back, in a tactual line, to the apostles of Christ. It was a stream of grace whose one channel was the imposition of episcopal hands. To suppose a break or interruption at any point was to suppose the precious treasure to be as water spilled upon the ground that cannot be gathered up again. So, by the time of Cyprian, the famous ecclesiastic, who died triumphantly as a martyr in the year 258, the bishop-priests were fast being elevated into a church above the Church, without whose rule and authority no soul could be saved.

A mediating priesthood had the preachers of the gospel and rulers of the Christian congregation become.

Where, then, was the propitiatory sacrifice that must be given them to offer? Sacramentalism had provided it in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It was under the priest's consecrating words that the bread and wine became the actual body and blood of the Lord, to be offered as a propitiation for sin, and then partaken of bodily by the communicants.[1]

Nevertheless the preacher, with his heralding and teaching, was not wholly thrust aside. As in our own

[1] "For if Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, is himself the Chief Priest of God the Father, and has first offered himself a sacrifice to the Father, and has commanded this to be done in commemoration of himself, certainly the priest truly discharges the office of Christ, who imitates that which Christ did; and he then offers a true and full sacrifice in the church to God the Father, when he proceeds to offer it according to what he sees Christ himself to have offered." (Cyprian, "On the Eucharist as a Sin Offering," Epis. LXII. c. 14.)

"They are the church who are a people united to the priest, and the flock which adheres to its pastor. Whence you ought to know that the bishop is in the church and the church in the bishop, and if any one be not with the bishop, that he is not in the church, and that those flatter themselves in vain who creep in not having peace with God's priests." (*Ibid.*, Epis. LXVIII. 8.)

"Priest and sacrifice are correlative terms. . . . A priest is one who offers sacrifice; and as is the sacrifice, so is the priest. He may have other powers annexed to his office, as the power of forgiving sins; and he may be likewise charged with the duty of preaching the word of God and exercising pastoral care over the people. But these other powers and duties are superadded and consequent. They are very suitably annexed to the priesthood, but they are not of its essence. The priest would not have been less a priest if they had been withheld from him." ("A Vindication of the Bull 'Apostolicæ Curæ,'" by the Cardinal Archbishop and Bishops of the Province of Westminister, pp. 26, 27.)

time it is possible to find here and there among the High Anglicans a priest—such, for example, as Canon Liddon—who is also a devoted preacher, so it was among the priests of that earlier time. From few pulpits has there ever been heard a greater amount of earnest and eloquent preaching than from that of John, bishop of Constantinople, during his ministry in that city. Though often excessively rhetorical—hence called by Luther the *gilder* rather than the *golden*—few would deny him his surname of Gold-mouthed, and yet he found it possible to say, "When thou seest the Lord sacrificed, and laid upon the altar, and the priest standing and praying over the Victim, and all the worshipers empurpled with the precious blood, canst thou then think that thou art still amongst men, and standing upon the earth?" In the list of homiletic writers, also, the name of Chrysostom stands first; and yet his treatise, from which the foregoing quotation has been made, bears the title of "On the Priesthood." Gregory the Great (d. 604) likewise was noted not only as an ecclesiastical ruler, but as a preacher and a teacher of homiletics and the pastoral care.

But such examples would prove most misleading, if used to represent the general character of the ministerial service of their time. Its course was downward. That which no prophet's eye was needed to foresee, is what was happening. The ceremonial of the altar more and more overshadowed the word of preaching. The perversion of the facts of redemption in the sacraments could not fail to interfere with their proper presentation from the pulpit. By the time of Charlemagne, the Church in the East had either sunk into spiritual torpor or been swept out of existence by the sword of

the idol-hating Mohammedan, while in the West indolence and ignorance in the clergy and gross superstition among the laity were everywhere prevalent. The great emperor—though himself scarcely able to write—ordered homilies to be prepared out of the writings of the fathers, and read to the congregations throughout his Holy Roman Empire. But the expedient was of little avail. The homilies were in Latin, a language that most hearers did not understand; and, moreover, the mechanical reading of others' words, whether in a foreign language or in one's own, is not God's ordinance of preaching. The state of things grew no better, but even worse.[1]

The revival of preaching was chiefly due, either directly or indirectly, to the monasteries. In them the saying of mass had ever held the same relatively high position that was accorded it in the parish churches. There was a larger homiletic element in the worship. Bernard of Clairvaux, though a churchman of churchmen, was seized with an irresistible desire, through reading the Scriptures and meditating in solitude with a holy and prayerful spirit, to tell others of the love-loyalty to Jesus that had become the master passion of his own life; and so he preached it not only to his fellow-monks but to all the people. A century later Francis of Assisi and Dominic sent out their preaching friars (or *brothers*). These men won the ears and hearts of the people everywhere. They ministered to a need that had not been met under the ministry of the parish priest, who in most instances had been content to dispense an

[1] "*Faith and theology lived in the sacraments.* . . No other form of grace could really be thought of than the magic-sacramental form." (Harnack, "Outline of History of Dogma," Book II., c. viii. iv. B.)

imaginary grace of the sacraments, while his flock and himself alike were sinking into the depths of ignorance and immorality. But the friars, whose preaching at the best was marred by much puerility and fanaticism, also lost their simplicity, and in the course of a few generations became a reproach and scandal to the Christian cause.

Other and more significant names appear, as God's self-renouncing witnesses in an evil time: John Tauler, the mystic and *illuminated teacher* (though in fact he showed more of spiritual intensity than of doctrinal knowledge—"a troubled spring"); John Wyclif, the Evangelical Doctor, laying the charge upon his organized company of Bible-readers and preachers, "Go, teach; it is the sublimest work," and sending them forth to gather together the poor people wherever it could be done, like Wesley's itinerants four hundred years later, in church or churchyard, in cottage, street, or field, and with sermon and song, to show them the way of salvation (1 Cor. i. 17); Savonarola, the martyr of Florence, who refused to be bribed into silence by the offer of a cardinal's hat, but brought the guilty city to its knees with his doctrine, and made the papal throne to tremble with his prophetic denunciation of its crimes. Then at last arose the Monk of Wittenberg, a greater Augustine from an Augustinian convent, and shook the heart of Christendom with the proclamation, from an awful and glorious personal experience, of the Christ of the New Testament and the believing heart. The subsequent course of this spoken gospel, which has given demonstration for all coming time that it cannot be bound in priestly rites, we do not need to follow.

But in forming a conception of any great and influ-

ential idea or institution, we must consent to prosecute our researches in two directions—the historical and the psychological. When and under what circumstances did this phenomenon appear, and how has it fared in the lapse of time?—that is the one question. Out of what facts of human nature, what needs or affections of the heart, did it arise?—that is the other question. The answer of neither can be fully appreciated apart from that of the other: they are mutually illuminative.

What, then, is the psychological origin of sacerdotalism? Let us not be surprised if we shall find it in no power or strength of our nature, but in weaknesses only.

First, in an infirmity of *thought*—the dominance of sense and imagination over good judgment. Is not this a well-nigh universal defect? We may see it illustrated in any little child, or in any untutored mind; but most minds are untutored, and all men and women are little children a few years older. Here is a fruitful source of idolatry. All nature is symbolic. It teaches, as in a parable, the unseen spiritual realities. The quickening wind that bloweth where it listeth is a sign of that creative Spirit whose breath is life indeed; the grain of the open field, ripening under sun and shower, is a sacrament, a *mystery*, of God's good will to men. "The invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity." Thus "two worlds are ours," and "earth is crammed with heaven." But men have not always found it easy to see in these visible tokens the presence of the one true and living God. Indeed, must we not all meet him within, before ever we can behold him without? Neither the unity of the creation nor the unity

of the Creator has always been discerned. Imagination peoples the woods and the waters, earth and sky, with powers and virtues and deities, "lords many and gods many"; while sense identifies these supernatural beings more or less closely with the natural objects by which they have been suggested. From the beetle to the king, from the rivulet murmuring through forest shades to the Nile which makes the land of Egypt, from the rude bowlder in the glen to the imperial sun in the heavens, the whole range of visible objects has been deified; and men have adored that which their own senses and imagination have created rather than Him to whom all things bear witness.

Now, had the men that were being gathered into the Catholic Church, chiefly out of heathenism, during the first Christian centuries, anything of such a spirit in them? Undoubtedly they were men of like infirmities with their fellows. Therefore they were fain to imagine the water of baptism, which symbolized the purification of the soul, to be itself charged with a divine potency, the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper to be themselves the body and blood of the Lord, and the Christian man that had been set apart to administer these sacraments and teach the will of God, to be an awful and mysterious being through whose voice and hands the power of Heaven was moving to deliver men's bodies and souls from the curse of sin. Thus were they prepared to listen favorably to the claim of the priest, if he should appear.

Then, there is an infirmity of the *heart* that is shown in dependence on human mediation. Shrinking back from the holy God, under a consciousness of sin and guilt, the soul cries out for mediatorship and reconciliation. It

is the voice of a real and imperative need. It is the cry that is met in the good news of Jesus Christ. God has come to us in Christ, bearing the burden of our sin, reconciled, speaking out of a human heart, and beseeching us by the cross of the man Christ Jesus to be reconciled to him. That is the preacher's message, and the satisfaction of the soul's most urgent and painful yearning for a Friend in need. But suppose the preacher himself should not rightly know and declare his gospel, or suppose the people should not awake to its true significance. Then will other mediation be fondly sought for, such as that of the saints and the mother of Jesus—and that of some fellow-man in the flesh, set forth by some revered authority, speaking as with the very voice of God, to whom sins may be confessed, from whom absolution may be received, through whose hands may thrill and flow the power of God for the saving of the soul. Thus again is the way prepared for the priest, if he should appear.

But deepest of all the causes that we are seeking is an infirmity of the *spirit*—the lack of spirituality, which leaves us to rest in the outward and formal rather than persevere in the inner life of faith and love. Whoever has learned how much easier it is oftentimes to kneel down than to pray, to go to church than to worship, to keep the Bible in the house than to know and follow its teachings, to make contributions of money than to love our neighbor as ourselves, to believe in "our Church" than to believe in the kingdom of God, to partake of the bread and wine at the Lord's table than to enter into the communion of the Holy Spirit—need not look outside his own heart to explain the resting of the soul in baptismal regeneration, and priestly absolution, and

penance, and the "Real Presence." It is an external and unspiritual faith. But do not think of it as the creation of theologians or ecumenical councils. It came out of the infirmities of that religious nature which makes us men. What could the priest have accomplished, if not welcomed by the people?

Or we may look at the same subject from the other side. Here is a man charged with the care of souls. He is to teach and preach Jesus Christ, incessantly, both publicly and from house to house. Much instruction has to be given, many appeals made. The sermon cannot be merely recited; it must be preached; and the same sermon cannot be repeated Sunday after Sunday. The truth must be shown in many aspects, and presented in diversified forms. The preacher must ever be ready also to pray with the people, as the leader of their worship. All this requires constant thought and intellectual diligence, the steady rule of the flesh by the spirit, and a heart ever warm and glowing with Christly love. Well said the man who in nothing was behind the very chiefest apostles, "as much as in me is" (Rom. i. 15): of no evangelical minister can the requirement be less than *as much as in him is.* But after all, it may be, few souls are converted and the church does not seem to be greatly edified. Perhaps the preacher is not a wholehearted Christian. Perhaps he is in some other respect ill qualified for his office. Or perhaps he is truly a man of God and sent forth into this ministry, but sore temptations beset him and his faith wavers under pressure. Does it seem strange, in any such case, that he should sometimes ask: "Is there not an easier way? is there not something more tangible? is there not a medicine for the soul of whose effect one may be assured in the very

administration of it? May not the service that I am to render be reduced to a system and a science? If I could know that, whatever my own state of mind or that of the people, the grace of God will always be given through the correct performance of the prescribed rite, would not that be a glad relief? would it not be a sure and calculable power in my ministry?" Thus it might occur—as our own hearts tell us again—that, in any period of the Church's history, the preacher should yield to tempting superstition and be perverted into a priest.

III

The Emptying of the Idea: The Lecturer

To many a Christian preacher sacerdotalism is impossible. The thought of claiming to be a priest, either Roman or Anglican, would be abhorrent. Reason and conscience would protest against it, till they were either bribed or stupefied. No playing fast-and-loose with the word *priest*—such as to say that it is etymologically the same as *presbyter,* or that there is a Christian *priesthood*—casts any shade of illusion upon his mind. Here the path is sun-clear, and it is only by willfully closing or half closing his eyes that he can stumble. Is he therefore in no danger of marring and enervating his ministry? It does not follow. He may fall out of line with the goodly fellowship of the prophets in another direction. He may lose his hold upon the distinctive truths of the gospel, and decline from the plane of the evangelical preacher to that of the moral and religious lecturer.

Indeed, if the preacher has ever gained a life-grasp intellectually and spiritually upon these truths, he is not likely to give them up. It would be as if a man were to throw away his daily bread. But perhaps he has not yet made them thus vitally and thoroughly his own. He has only accepted and begun to appropriate them. "If ye abide in my word," Jesus said to certain of his hearers who believed on him, "then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Perhaps the young preacher has not so continued in the word of Jesus, and known him who

is the Truth, as to be made "free indeed" (John viii. 31-36). He must go on. But he may go back: under the stress of intellectual perplexities or moral infirmity, his steps may slide, and his tongue fall to such teaching of religious doctrine or moral precepts as he feels capable of, apart from the gospel of forgiveness and conscious sonship and the communion of the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ.

Let us try to see more particularly how this may come to pass. Religion is a vast subject. The great objects of philosophic thought, from the beginning of human speculation, have been God, the world, and the soul, these three—which indeed include all *appearances* and all *reality*. But the same, without any exception, are included in the sphere of religion. It touches even the most trivial-seeming events of daily life; while on the other hand it kindles the highest and holiest aspirations of the soul, and draws aside the veil from the endless ages. Therefore its particular objects, and the aspects in which they appear, are numberless. It reveals God not only as Creator and Upholder of all things, but also as Father and Saviour; it shows the world to be not only the expression of infinite power and wisdom, but also the scene of providential care; it makes man known to himself not only collectively as constituting a community, but individually, as responsible, made in the image of his Maker—not only as a citizen, a friend, a son, a husband, a father, with special duties growing out of these relations, but also as a sinner in need of the birth from above; it directs mind and heart to the man Christ Jesus not only as the Teacher of truth and duty, but also as the one Mediator between God and man—not only in the villages of Galilee, or in quiet rural places,

bidding men "judge not," "pray always," "love one another," fear God and keep his commandments, but on the cross beneath the darkened sky, with broken heart, God's only and beloved Son, making reconciliation for the sins of the people, drawing all men to himself.

Now it is evident that a man may know some of these truths and not others, may take some and not others into his own inner life, may be prepared to teach some and not others to his fellow-men. God's revelation that was given in the fullness of the time, the revelation of his own suffering and redeeming love, and of his own abiding Spirit in the hearts of his children—that is the truth which makes the most strenuous demands upon the soul, and accordingly which may be but feebly apprehended, while other truths of religion are firmly held and conscientiously taught.

Or we may take another view. A book is put into the preacher's hands. It is a very large Book—a literature, a library. Out of it he is to gather materials for preaching, as long as he lives. But these materials are many and diverse. They represent the whole of religious truth, in all its phases and in all its innumerable applications to life and conduct. The fundamental facts of the gospel might be recorded in very few words—"I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4). But the bare record of these facts of our redemption in Christ would make a very different book from the actual Bible. Not only was most of the Bible written before the coming of Christ, but the twenty-seven books that were written afterwards do by

no means confine themselves to the rehearsal of these facts. They tell very many things that Jesus said and did; they relate the story of the founding of Christian churches in Asia and Europe; they have much to say about righteousness of life, and about future reward and punishment. So we can see plainly enough how one may preach out of the Bible—its biographies, its histories, its law, its precepts—certain doctrines of God and man, and yet in no proper sense preach the word of God as it was made known to such a man as the apostle John, or his later-called brother, the Apostle to the Gentiles. It is true that even the ethical teaching of the unevangelical teacher will miss much of vital power, in not being illumined and vivified by the Christian revelation.[1] Nevertheless it may be in itself a powerful setting forth of moral truth.

The prototype of such a teacher may be found in the Wise Man of ancient Israel. In the time of Solomon, and later, till his office was absorbed into that of the

[1] "The late Rev. Dr. Henderson, of Glasgow, when newly licensed, was preaching, on the Saturday before a communion, for an extremely moderate minister. . . . 'I do not know, Mr. Henderson,' said the latter, 'what is the difference between you evangelicals and us; but I suppose it is that you preach doctrines, while we preach duties.' 'I do not know about that,' said Mr. Henderson; 'we preach duties too.' 'Well,' said the old man, 'for example, my action sermon to-morrow is to be on lying; and my divisions are, first, the nature of lying; secondly, the sin of lying; and thirdly, the consequences of lying. Now what could you add to that?' 'Well,' replied Mr. Henderson, 'I would add two things—first, "Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds"; and secondly, "Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor; for we are members one of another."'" ("The Preacher and His Models," p. 257.)

scribe, this Wise Man might have been seen, seated perhaps in the gate of the city, instructing one or more listeners, whom he would fain make disciples, in the ways of right living. He is mentioned together with the priest and the prophet in Jeremiah xviii. 18: "For the law shall not perish from the priest, nor *counsel* from the *wise,* nor the word from the prophet." What he taught he had learned through heeding the voice of "the man within the breast," through personal experience of good and evil, through reflection on the course of human life. In Greece he would have been called a philosopher. We need not deny him—nor any other sincere seeker of truth—Divine guidance; but his was not the inner immediate revelation of the judgments and the forgiveness of the Eternal, that thrilled the soul of the prophet, and constrained him to cry unto all the people, "Thus saith the Lord."

In what have been called the Wisdom Books of the Bible—Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes—we have a large element of such counsel as was offered by the Wise Men. Compare these books with the Psalms or the books of the Prophets—Proverbs, for example (especially chapters x.-xxxi.), with Isaiah. It is somewhat as if one should compare Spurgeon's "John Ploughman's Talk" with his "Sermons." It is in the prophet's word that the deeper and fuller truth is published: the word that humbles the soul before the holiness and majesty of Jehovah, that crushes it into the dust with an intolerable sense of sin, but also whispers the sweet assurance of pardon to the penitent; that opens up the vision—"a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawn"—of the Suffering Servant of the Lord, the Divine Man who should appear in his time, "whose visage

was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men," who was smitten and afflicted for transgressions not his own, whose soul was made an offering for sin, who should be satisfied at last with the abundant and far-reaching life that should arise out of his death; that foretells the triumph and glory of God's kingdom on earth. Shall the Christian preacher trace his spiritual lineage back to the Wise Men of Israel? It is another succession that claims him—even that of which Zacharias the priest spoke, when at the naming of his son, who was to be "a prophet and more than a prophet," he was filled with the Holy Spirit, and said, "As he spake by the mouth of *his holy prophets which have been since the world began*" (Luke i. 70). To enter into the fellowship of prophetic witnesses is our calling—not, indeed, to build their tombs, flinging a stone now and then at some living prophet, but to catch the hallowed flame of their truth and spirit.

Looking forward from New Testament times, to trace the history of the preacher turned lecturer, we may pass almost without notice a period of fifteen hundred years. For the degradation of preaching that marked the greater part of this long period did not take the form of moral or theistic lecturing. At its worst it was certainly unworthy of that name.

It took the form, first, of a false and insincere rhetoric. For Christian preaching degenerated in the early centuries through the influence of a class of men, the sophists, or rhetoricians, who followed public speaking as a trade. They cultivated their art with sedulous care, and practiced it diligently. In some cases they went from place to place, called the people together by various devices, and delivered addresses for money and

applause. Their evil example was contagious. Its imitation in the Church corrupted preaching, somewhat as the imitation of Greek religious rites corrupted Christian worship. For there were men of little or no spiritual insight into the gospel, who went forth, in the spirit of these Greek rhetoricians, to narrate its facts, repeat its phrases, and publish its doctrines, as a popular or a profitable kind of public speaking.[1]

But the sacerdotal superstition and the intellectual darkness of mediævalism were coming on apace, and such religious addresses as now began to be delivered cannot be dignified with the name of lectures—the rational and moral elements were too conspicuously absent. Their predominant note was miracle-stories and frightful superstitions. Then arose the Revival of Learning and the Reformation, which rendered this

[1] "No sooner is any new impulse given either to philosophy or religion than there arises a class of men who copy the form without the substance, and try to make the echo of the past sound like the voice of the present. So has it been with Christianity. It came into the educated world in the simple dress of a Prophet of Righteousness. It won that world by the stern reality of its life, by the subtle bonds of its brotherhood, by its divine message of consolation and hope. Around it thronged the race of eloquent talkers who persuaded it to change its dress and to assimilate its language to their own. It seemed thereby to win a speedier and completer victory. But it purchased conquest at the price of reality. With that its progress stopped. There has been an element of sophistry in it ever since; and so far as in any age that element has been dominant, so far has the progress of Christianity been arrested. Its progress is arrested now because many of its preachers live in an unreal world. The truths they set forth are truths of utterance rather than truths of their lives." (Hatch, "The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church," p. 114.)

kind of discourse generally impossible. But neither of these two great events could secure the pulpit against all possibility and danger of losing the truth of the gospel. A down-grade tendency might still become operative; but it would take the direction of formal observances, or hard dogmatism, or practical philosophy, or "natural religion," rather than that of puerile fancy and fable. Such at least are the countercurrents of Christian preaching, here and there, during the last three hundred years.

The pulpit of the eighteenth century was unhappily preëminent in this evangelical declension. In Germany, the home of the Reformation, it was the age of the so-called Illuminism. The great truth of justification by faith and its closely related doctrines, with which the battle of the Reformation had been won, were no longer the prevailing message of the pulpit. Christ was preached as an example rather than as the Divine Saviour. His miraculous works were explained away. Duties were inculcated, but evangelical motives were wanting. The sinner was taught to amend his life rather than to seek, through repentance and faith, a new heart. There was indeed some true evangelical teaching; and on the other hand, pulpit discourse sometimes sunk so low as to occupy itself with hygienic or business topics—while the "potato-preachers" discussed the rational methods of agriculture. The inscription on the monument of Zollikofer, the eloquent preacher of Leipzig from 1758 to 1788, suggests no less fairly than painfully the general character of the preaching of the time: "He lives on here by his teaching, and he lives on there in the sphere of souls, where Socrates and Jesus live."

Partly contemporaneous with the Illuminists of Germany were the Moderates of Scotland. Up to their time the Scottish preaching generally had been noted for excessive theological distinctions and the absence of simplicity and grace of language. The Moderate school introduced a less scholastic style of discourse, which was well; but it also toned down or silently disregarded the essential facts and experiences of the gospel, which was disastrous. Its best representative was Dr. Hugh Blair, who died in the year 1800, at the age of eighty-two, after a ministry of fifty-seven years in the city of Edinburgh. His published sermons, translated into various languages, were widely read, and his "Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-lettres" were in common use as a text-book for half a century. What was the defect of Blair's preaching? It was not that he failed to offer Christ as the Saviour; for there was no such absolute failure. It was in the relatively small place that this word of salvation occupied in his sermons. It did not so penetrate and inform the whole message as to make it distinctively the Christian gospel.

Fidelity and power in any teaching are largely matters of emphasis. The question is not simply what facts or truths are set forth, but also in what proportions and relations. The American historian who should pass lightly over the War of the Revolution and the formation of the national government, while he related with much fullness of detail the admission of this and that state into the Union, or the instructor in physiology who should pay more attention to the hands and feet than to the heart and brain, might well be complained of as giving an untrue account of his subject. It is not enough that no important principle or material fact has

been omitted: the less must be distinguished from the greater, and all must be set in right relations to one another. Many are the messages of the Christian pulpit, but there is one Truth that is in them all, the first and the last, All in all: "We preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 23, 24).

It was Paul's one aim in life to know Christ. All things but loss for the excellency of this knowledge. "That I may know him"—not in an historical way, but as revealed by the Spirit within—that was the goal of his endeavors. For to know Christ was to become like him, to be conformed more and more unto his likeness. Was Paul taught of God in this matter? or is there something higher and better? This is the highest, this the ideal. The measure of any man's knowledge of Christ in the Spirit is the measure of life's worth to him. God's messengers, therefore, that would do the very best for men, that would bring them the supreme riches, that would uplift them toward the Highest—what other ideal can they have than, That I may *preach Him?*

Let us turn to the English pulpit of this same century. It was the time of the Wesleyan movement. What was the character of the preaching, so far as it was not affected by this great evangelical revival? Its general characteristics are well known. The fervor and effectiveness of the Nonconformist preaching had declined. The sermons of the clergy of the Establishment were churchly moral essays. John Wesley, the son of a minister of the gospel and a most conscientious and re-

ligious mother, himself morally earnest and religious from childhood, admitted to the Lord's Supper at eight years of age, ordained to the ministry in early manhood, had to think and feel his way toward the apprehension of the gospel of the divine forgiveness in Jesus Christ as slowly and painfully as did Martin Luther in his monastery.

Did the lowering of the evangelical tone of the pulpit commend Christianity to unbelievers? On the contrary, the doctrinal degeneration and the skeptical mind seem to have interacted, to the increase of both. At any rate, it was an age of widespread and increasing unbelief. Bishop Joseph Butler, author of the "Analogy," begins his charge to the clergy of his diocese in the year 1751 with these anxious words: "It is impossible for me, my brethren, upon our first meeting of this kind, to forbear lamenting with you the general decay of religion in this nation; which is now observed by every one, and has been for some time the complaint of all serious persons. The influence of it is more and more wearing out the minds of men, even of those who do not pretend to enter into speculations on the subject: but the number of those who do, and who profess themselves unbelievers, increases, and with their numbers their zeal." Butler himself did noble service with his great book in vindication of biblical truth. But unbelief is of the heart and spirit no less than of the intellect; and the deep-thinking bishop's sermons—such at least as have come down to us—are better adapted to teach the philosophy of human nature than to satisfy the inmost spirit's thirst for the living God. It is indeed through the close and clear-sighted analysis of our own nature that the moral realities of conscience, with the theistic truth which they

imply, are distinctly recognized. Of the highest value, therefore, in the way of self-knowledge and the philosophy of religion, are such sermons as these. But for the most part another type of teaching is demanded in the pulpit. It was heard in the thronging congregations of Wesley—in the parish church of Richard Cecil at Hampstead—from Whitefield's lips of fire. If the New Testament is true, man was made to become a son of God in his heavenly Father's favor and likeness; this, but nothing less, will satisfy his deepest need; in this alone will he find eternal life: and this has been offered him in Jesus Christ. The knowledge of Christ in the fullness of his grace and truth is the best preventive and antidote of unbelief, being the very bread of life to the soul; and it is to communicate this knowledge that men are sent forth from God in ministry to their fellowmen.

> Alone, O Love ineffable!
> Thy saving name is given,
> To turn aside from thee is hell,
> To walk with thee is heaven.

Is there any preaching, in the present day, that does not find its determinative idea in the New Testament? Surely it would be no breach of charity to say that such in general seems to be the preaching of the Broad-church and the Liberal pulpit. Let us take two able and noble-minded men as their respective representatives.

Dean Stanley, in his lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland, has only words of sympathy and approval for the Moderate school of preachers: "It was now that there began the full ascendency of that great philosophic virtue and evangelic grace in the Church of Scotland, of which the name has in these latter days

been used as though it were the title of a deadly heresy, but which the apostle has employed to designate one of the most indispensable of Christian duties in the impressive precept, 'Let your moderation be known to all men.' Not till quite our own generation have poetry, philosophy, and history found so natural a home in the clergy of England as they did then in the clergy of Scotland. . . . No other sermons in Great Britain have been followed by so splendid a success as the once famous, now forgotten, discourses of Hugh Blair. . . . Even the despot of criticism (fastidious judge, zealous High-churchman, fanatically English as he was), the mighty Samuel Johnson, who had a few years before declared that no Scottish clergyman had written any good work on religious subjects, pronounced, after his perusal of Blair's first sermon, 'I have read it with more than approbation—to say it is good is to say too little.'" The Christian gospel, likewise, has only words of sympathy and approval for intellectual enlightenment. It is not of the darkness, that it should shudder at any light that may be kindled. Let it have sway, and it will not only so enlarge the heart as to quicken all dead orthodoxy into living truth, but will welcome also the aid of history, poetry, and science in rendering all intolerance and fanaticism unbearable. But spiritual knowledge is itself the deepest and greatest of all knowledge; and the gospel is the supreme revelation of spiritual truth —the supreme knowledge of God. How can it yield its place of supremacy to any other? The apostle announced the truths of natural religion; he tried to show the Athenians the unreasonableness of idolatry by the teaching of their own poets; he gladly acknowledged the revelation of God in the Hebrew Scriptures: was he

therefore careful to preach with *moderation,* and to give the cross of Christ but one place among other equally prominent places in his ministry (1 Cor. ii.)?

Dr. James Martineau has said: "This secondary doctrine, of which he [Christ] is not the source, but the object, was gradually assuming shape from the first Pentecost to the end of the fourth century (the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381); and though it is nothing but a crystallization of human opinion respecting a recent divine epoch, it has passed into the theology of Christendom, and gives a special form and color to all the lights of piety that are transmitted through it." (Preface to "Hymns of Praise and Prayer.") Here the question is distinctly raised: Is the doctrine concerning the Lord Jesus Christ that was proclaimed on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the crucifixion, that was put forth in the Epistles and the Gospels as they appeared, one after another, that the Catholic Church attempted to define in the first two General Councils—is this a "secondary" or an original teaching? Undoubtedly Christ is its *object:* is then the doctrine of which Christ is the *source* something different, or is it the same?

What was Jesus' testimony, in word and act, direct and indirect, concerning himself? Did he simply bid men trust in the heavenly Father, or did he say, Come unto me? did he simply ask to be received as a friend, or did he claim the sovereign allegiance of the soul? did he simply speak an instructive and quickening word, or did he declare himself to be the Resurrection and the Life? did he simply desire to be remembered after his departure, as any one might, or did he say, This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins? In the whole course of

his self-manifestation to men, before the people, among his diciples, and on the cross, did Jesus show himself to be only the wise teacher and the holiest example, or supremely the sinless and atoning Saviour, the object of faith, in whom is life and salvation?

> What is the point where Himself lays stress?
> Does the precept run, "Believe in good,
> In justice, truth, now understood
> For the first time"?—or, "Believe in me,
> Who lived and died, yet essentially
> Am Lord of life"?

One or the other, the humanitarian or the evangelical doctrine, must be the word of God's grace to a sinful world. If it is the evangelical doctrine, then to proclaim the other would be to fall far short of Christian preaching. Jesus himself is the Evangel.

But let us return from the criticism of others—may it never be less than enlightened and just—to the questioning of ourselves. What is the grace wherein we stand and tell our Master's message? What is Jesus to us? To the rabbis and Pharisees, he was a deceiver of the people; to the man who asked him, "Bid my brother divide the inheritance with me," he was a wise umpire in personal disputes; to the disciples before the ascension, he was the Restorer of Israel; to many in the present time, he is the most holy and perfect of men. Is any of these our confession of faith? What place do we give this Man in thought, and love, and service? Less than the least of all Christians may we be; nevertheless our life is lived in the divine succession of apostles and prophets, of evangelists and teachers, if the grace has been given us to preach among the people, in this age of the Spirit's power, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

IV

The Call to Service

No more truly does the light of heaven fall upon the earth than the light of the highest heaven falls upon the human spirit. Among the first experiences of childhood is the thought of God, the impulse of prayer, the sense of the infinite. The sinful soul chooses darkness, but even to such a soul sitting in the thick night some heavenly truth glimmers through. The eye of the eagle or of the lion cannot receive it; but our eyes can receive it, because, being human, we are akin to the Divine.

It is not a dream. On the contrary, it is the disclosure of the Real. To the "practical man" the earth is very solid and quite stationary. He builds his house upon it, goes hither and thither over its surface to make a living, eats and drinks of its products. The alternation of day and night is "natural" and suits his purpose well; he falls asleep and awakes in the same place. On opening his eyes, morning after morning, he calls for the familiar earth, and it is there. Little does he realize what a tour he is making, and what a distance he has traveled since last his eyelids closed in the oblivion of sleep. Yet even the schoolbooks tell him that the seemingly self-sustained earth is dependent every moment on invisible forces; and that, so far from being stationary, it is whirling round and round, and sweeping through space at the rate of nineteen miles a second. These discoveries of the scientific intellect are equally true with what is reported by the eye or the hand; they are truer, and more fundamental.

But even scientific knowledge does not reach the underlying Reality. It is through the philosophic and moral reason that we have the power to see the Eternal Mind and Will in which all that we know of nature and mind, of law and force, of things and personalities, finds its explanation and its Cause. For

> Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
> And back of the flour the mill;
> And back of the mill is the wheat, and the shower,
> And the sun, and the Father's will.

This "vision of Him that reigns" is for every soul. Its dawn deepens into morning as we live more faithfully in accord with that which is likest God in ourselves. To those who continue in the word of Jesus Christ, it grows into the perfect manifestation of the God of holy love. (Job xxxii. 8; Psa. xxiv. 3; xxv. 14; Isa. lvii. 15; Matt. v. 8; xi. 25; xvi. 17; John v. 30, 44; 1 John iv. 7, 8.)

One characteristic of this personal knowledge of God is its imperative force. Unlike the poet's vision of beauty, or the scientist's conception of natural law, or the lover's ideal of womanhood and home, it *commands.* It lays upon the soul a perpetual obligation: "Seek the Highest; do the will of God; repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Hence it may either be obeyed or disobeyed. Religion is ethical: the voice of God is the voice of duty. "Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

Moreover, the vision of God may illumine our own particular allotment of Christian service. It was so with the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. i. 4, 5). It was so with John the son of Zacharias (Luke iii. 1, 2). It was so with Saul of Tarsus (Acts xxvi. 19). It was so

in every case, we believe, with the true prophets and apostles. But how is it nowadays? Unbelief replies that

> The times are changed and gone the day
> When the high heavenly land,
> Though unbeheld, about them lay,
> And men could understand.

At least it would be presumptuous for men of the present day to suppose themselves divinely charged with a duty and a mission. All has been changed since the last evangelist of the New Testament was sent forth with his evangel. So complains the fainting heart of unbelief.

It is probable, however, that we are ready to make one prominent exception. As to the ministry of the gospel, we believe that it is a divine vocation, even unto the end of the Christian age; but as to all other forms of life-long service to men—that of the farmer, the carpenter, the physician, the architect, the teacher—they are only trades and professions: no voice of God calls any man to follow them. This also is unbelief.

Should we not expect that the God in whose hand our life is, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, would have some care for the occupation upon which must be concentrated the powers of head and heart and hand with which he has endowed us all? Suppose that in some one pursuit we can do better service than in any other, are we under no obligation to follow that pursuit, whatever it may be? May not every young man, as he stands at the parting of the life-courses, ask, "Lord, which wilt thou have me to take?" and hope to be directed? It may be replied that most young men are not conscious of any such guidance. But it must also

be considered, whether most young men offer any such prayer.

Are we to be told that God calls no man to be an inventor, a discoverer, a thinker, a lawmaker, a linguist, a writer? Here is a skillful surgeon. Down among the nerves and arteries, grazing life's innermost seat, sinks his keen-edged knife. A slight miscalculation would be fatal. Hesitation or tremor means death. But there is no miscalculation, and no quiver of a nerve: he aims at a hairbreadth and does not miss. Out comes the offending substance safely detached from all its connections, and a life is saved. Such is the work of his hands for forty years. Does God care nothing for it? Does he call no man to minister thus to imperiled and suffering fellow-men? Wordsworth believed himself to be a "dedicated spirit," under moral compulsion to devote his life to the poetic interpretation of nature and man—"else sinning greatly." When his great poem, "The Excursion," reached a sale of only five hundred copies in the first six years of its publication, he said to his friend Southey, "I shall continue to write with, I trust, the light of Heaven upon me." Was such a faith unauthorized? I heard Dr. William H. McGuffey, of the University of Virginia, remark: "If I am in my place, I am as truly called to teach as Bishop Johns is called to preach." None of those who sat in his classroom would have been disposed, I think, to deny the validity of that claim.[1]

[1] "My distress was so great that I threw myself flat on the floor. The voiceless cry of my soul was, 'O God, I cannot be thy minister!' Then there came to me, as I lay, a vision, a new hope, a perception that I could serve God in business with the same devotion as in preaching, and that to make

Wherein, then, may we regard the revelation made to the Christian preacher of his appointed way of life, as differing from a like revelation in the case of any other Christian man? Not in kind, but in degree. The highest calling is that of the ministry of God's word. Was it not our Lord's own work among men, and that for which he trained the chosen Twelve? True, the distinction between secular and sacred is in the light of Christ a vanishing distinction. To the Christian the house in which he lives is a sanctuary, the government to which he pays honor and tribute a divine ordinance; and all true work—plowing, building, housekeeping, teaching—is sacred; it is the work of God through human hands. Every Luz, when once the glory of God is seen there, becomes a Bethel. Whereas to the secular mind—and such a mind, alas! does not always avoid the pulpit—even the preaching of the gospel is secular, because it is done for temporal ends and in the time-spirit. Still some employments are more and some less immediately and significantly connected with the coming of God's kingdom. This is true of the different offices of the Church itself. Compare the diaconate with the

money for God might be my sacred calling. The vision of this service, and its nature as a sacred ministry, were so clear and joyous that I rose to my feet, and, with new hope in my heart, exclaimed aloud, 'O God, I can be thy minister! I will go back to Boston. I will make money for God, and that shall be my ministry!'

"From that time I have felt myself as much appointed and ordained to make money for God as if I had been permitted to carry out my own plan and been ordained to preach the gospel. I am God's man, and the ministry to which God has called me is to make and administer money for him, and I consider myself responsible to discharge this ministry and to give account of it to him." (Alpheus Hardy.)

apostolate (Acts vi. 1-4), or the gift of prophecy with that of tongues (1 Cor. xiv. 39), or the exposition of the Scriptures with the building of the house in which it is done (Luke vii. 4, 5; iv. 16-32). And from this point of view the vocation of the Christian minister is the first of all vocations. It means much for human welfare to be a good physician: it means more to be a good preacher. It is always bad to choose the wrong calling; but if the wrongly chosen or the wrongly rejected calling be that of the Christian ministry, the mistake is calamitous. Accordingly for this office and work the clearest and most imperative call is to be expected.

How can these things be? what is a call to preach? We cannot trace the way of the Spirit. Here, for illustration, is a sinful and guilty soul; but he does not truly know himself to be sinful and guilty till the Spirit of God convinces him. Also when he becomes a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ, it is the Spirit of Christ that wakens in him the filial feeling. But just how such spiritual knowledge is communicated, it is beyond our power to tell—though there is no mystery here at which any one need stumble and fall into darkness. Why, then, should not the same thing be true of the call to ministerial service?

> Let the manner be unknown,
> So I may with Thee be one.

But the call itself, the *command,* the distinct pressure of obligation to serve God in the gospel of his Son—this may be felt and known. Bishop J. M. Thoburn, the veteran missionary to India, tells an experience which to ten thousand of his Christian coworkers at home and abroad contains nothing unreal or hard to be understood: "After preaching about two months

without seeing any results, I began to be disturbed as to whether I was doing right. So one day I went into the forest, and under the shade of a maple tree had a quiet season of prayer. While I was praying the Lord came near and said to me, 'Go preach my gospel.' He sent me. That hour was the foundation of all I have been enabled to do since. The confidence of being *sent* has never left me." Every preacher is an *apostle.*

Indeed, if such a conviction should quit the heart of the Christian missionary, the evangelist, the pastor, how could he go on? He must have something of the faith of the man who wrote out of an abiding consciousness: "Paul, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle separated"—even from the moment of birth (Gal. i. 5)—"unto the gospel of God" (Rom. i. 1; 1 Cor. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 1; Gal. i. 1; Eph. i. 1).

But there is danger of illusion here as everywhere. The prophet may "speak a vision out of his own heart and not out of the mouth of the Lord." Self-confidence may be mistaken for spiritual illumination. Hence it is our duty, as it was the duty of the New Testament Christians, to try the spirits—our own first of all—whether they be of God.

Our security lies in *Receptiveness* and *Verification.*

1. What is the right Receptive Attitude toward the Divine call? Not a state of ecstatic unconsciousness. Not a suspension of judgment, or moral perception, or choice; but the free activity of our faculties quickened and illumined by the Spirit of truth. If we would hear, we have to listen.

There must be *an acknowledgment of darkness.* The man who regards himself competent to choose his own course of life, asking counsel, if at all, of his fellow-

men only, need not wonder if he should be unable to say, The hand of the Lord was upon me. "The meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way." There will be most earnest prayers for guidance, out of an unceasing prayerfulness—the upward look, the strong desire, the expectant waiting upon God.

Again, there must be *a willingness to do the will of God,* as it is made known. Very barren of results—as every teacher knows—is the instruction that was not desired and sought for. The heart of the true learner is the child-heart. Unless we have the will to believe, we shall find it easy to disbelieve or to doubt. But in the case of moral truth there must also be the disposition to *do.* Many a doubter, for example, would believe in the sovereignty of Christ over the soul, if it were a question in literature or political economy. It is because of the practical consequences that he hesitates. Now it is nowise different with the question of our life work. In the prayer for light there must be the willing heart to walk in the path as it is disclosed.

Here is the crucial test. We may ask selfishly, ready to act willfully: prayer is Christlike asking. Would I really be at one with the God whose guidance I am seeking? or, after all, would I prefer self-direction? Sometimes we come to a friend professedly for advice, when our real object is approval. Whatever the form of the request, the inner purport of it is not, What decision ought I to make? but, Ought I not to decide thus? please say, Yes. Such likewise may be the purport of a prayer to God. If I have set my heart on becoming a lawyer, and given no welcome to the recurring thought of the Christian ministry, it is quite possible that after saying appropriate prayers I shall be conscious of noth-

ing better than a seeming confirmation of my own preference. Or, on the other hand, if I am virtually predetermined to enter the ministry, the same result might well follow upon the offering of prayers. Why should we expect God to show us the way, when it is only with a certain reservation that we purpose to walk in it? Would we be pupils of the Spirit? We must come with "unveiled face" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

When Isaiah, in his young manhood, saw the vision of God in the Temple, he was crushed with a sense of personal unworthiness. The heavenly beings might cover their faces and the foundations of the threshold might tremble, but for him there was something more awful than for them: the conscious woe of guilt and uncleanness was upon him. The holy scene dims and darkens to his sight. But when the purifying fire of Jehovah's holiness and love touches his lips, expiating his sin and awakening responsive love, and there is heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? he offers himself freely as Jehovah's messenger. "Here am I: send me." Isaiah would not dare to go without being sent: nevertheless he volunteers to be a preacher.

When the heavens were opened unto Ezekiel, by the river Chebar, showing him visions of God, he fell upon his face. But the voice that spake to him said, "Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee." Then came the call to his memorable ministry: "Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel. . . . I do send thee unto them, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord your God." *Stand upon thy feet.* He must stand ready to go, if he would have the consciousness of being sent. (Ezek. ii. 1-5.)

So was it then; so is it now. More than twenty-five hundred years after the time of Isaiah and Ezekiel, more than twenty-five hundred miles distant from their native land, and amid surroundings that would have been strangely unintelligible to them, the call of God is still heard, and the answering word of committal spoken by the obedient soul:

> The while I listened came a voice—
> I knew not whence, I could not see;
> But when my waiting spirit heard,
> I cried, "Lord, here am I, send me!"

But we shall also find that our vision will be clarified by *the actual doing of the Lord's work.* Capacity is realized in activity. Do what you can, if you would come to know your real ability; it will never assert itself in sloth or idleness. Venture into whatever good work seems to open before you—one step at a time: you may find a long path of light where now there is little but darkness.

John B. Gough, when a young man shamefully wasting his life, rose in a meeting and attempted to speak. It gave him a strange delight. It awakened the consciousness of a hitherto dormant gift of speech, and suggested a corresponding career. He became the great dramatic orator and temperance lecturer of his day. By addressing an audience he learned that he could address an audience, and ought to do so. If somehow you feel prompted to speak the word of God, speak it whenever the opportunity occurs. Do not say, "If I could only be sure that I am called." It may or may not be your calling to abandon all other employments and devote yourself to the pastoral care of a congregation; but the path of faithfulness is the path of discov-

ery. Do with a willing mind the work that seems possible to you now. Preach; not in some one else's way, but in your own way; not necessarily in the pulpit, but in the prayer meeting, in the Sunday school, wherever you can get a hearing. Live and walk in the Spirit; fill your heart with some Scripture truth set aglow by personal experience, and tell it to others. So may you expect to be led by the hand of Him whose will is your true happiness and your proper work.

2. The Verification of a call to preach may be found in three things:

(1) In the *gift of preaching.* I do not speak here simply of natural qualifications. These indeed are essential. Frailty of health, feebleness of voice, dullness of mind, inaptitude for public speech, a cold scholastic temper, give little promise of an effective pastoral ministry. Again, if there be a distinct and decided capacity for some other line of work—mechanical, artistic, commercial, intellectual—it will be wise to ask, Does not my natural endowment point out my proper sphere and service?

But the gift of preaching includes the natural gifts of mind and speech, and something more. It is the natural penetrated by the divine. "Having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy *according to the proportion of faith*" (Rom. xii. 6)—according to the realization of the life of God in the soul. It is a spiritual talent, the same now as in the earliest times. The possessor of it may be conscious of its exercise. He may know that he is preaching. He may feel something better than the orator's thrill of ecstasy before an audience. He has tried hard to get possession of some word of

God, but now the word of God has got possession of him, and through his kindling heart and lips, in his own imperfect ideas and words, is communicating itself to the souls before him. Using his natural faculties to the utmost, speaking as a man to men, in every thought, syllable, tone, and act, nevertheless there is an impulse, an illumination, an unction, a sense of superhuman help and power, that fulfills to him the word of his Lord: "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you."

Is it given to any of us to speak thus? Then we ought to do it. Indeed, the gift is a trust. Necessity is laid upon us. I have never forgotten the words of a dear old saint loved and revered in my youth: "If I could preach, I should have no trouble about the call; I believe that everybody that can preach ought to preach." Was he wrong? At any rate, before controverting his belief, let us make sure that by preaching we mean, as he did, the New Testament *charisma* of prophetic speech. "Having then gifts, . . . let us *prophesy according to the proportion of faith.*"

Note here the distinction between preaching and devoting one's whole life to the ministry of the gospel. The prophet, or preacher, in the churches of apostolic times, was not always, or even usually, a man who had abandoned all other employments, to be supported as a minister by the contributions of the people. He was simply a man spiritually gifted to speak the word of God with insight and unction, who did speak it, as opportunity offered. It was so, likewise, in the churches of the next two centuries. In modern Christianity, this New Testament institute of lay preaching has been emphasized by the Society of Friends, and

largely exemplified in Methodism.[1] The first question therefore is, Can I preach? If we can, assuredly we may and must. Then will arise the further question, Must I be so separated unto the gospel of God as to put my hand no longer to any other employment?

(2) In the *love of preaching.* The office of the Christian ministry in the circumstances of our time is not without its attractions. While by no means a highroad to wealth, it promises a fair support, with freedom from business care and complications. It commands the respect of every community: marriage, baptism, burial, the Church, the Sabbath, the Bible, are the high and sacred institutions of which it stands as the representa-

[1] "There is no early trace of the later idea that buying and selling, handicraft and farming, were in themselves inconsistent with the office of a Christian minister. The bishops and presbyters of those early days kept banks, practiced medicine, wrought as silversmiths, tended sheep, or sold their goods in open market. They were like the second generation of nonjuring bishops a century and a half ago, or like the early preachers of the Wesleyan Methodists." (Hatch, "Organization of the Early Christian Churches," pp. 151, 152.)

The first three Methodist societies in the United States were organized and ministered to by local preachers—by Robert Strawbridge in Maryland, Philip Embury in New York City, and Captain Thomas Webb, a battle-scarred veteran of the British army, in Philadelphia.

"In 1760 a company of these now oppressed Irish Palatines embarked at Limerick, as Christian emigrants, for America. The crowd that saw them leave little thought that two of that small band on board—Philip Embury, the local preacher, and Barbara Heck, the honest Methodist—were destined, in the mysterious providence of God, to influence for good countless myriads of human beings, and that their names would live as long as the sun and moon endure." (Tyerman's "Life of Wesley," Vol. II., p. 239.)

tive. It offers a passport to refined society: into every library and parlor in his congregation the minister—however obscure his origin—is welcomed. It affords opportunity for literary culture and enjoyment. It brings a man before respectful and attentive audiences—a most fascinating position to many minds. Such are its natural advantages.

But the love of these things, any or all, is not the true drawing of the heart to Christ's holy ministry. Just as love for the Church is not a feeling of pleasure and pride in an eloquent preacher or a beautiful edifice or a time-honored ritual, but is the devotion of the heart to God and his cause, so also love for the ministerial office is a spiritual affection—an enthusiasm for truth, for the saving of souls, for the cross and kingdom of Christ.

It is no new thing for priests to "teach for hire," or even for prophets to "divine for money" (Micah iii. 11). We may trade with the gospel. When Amaziah, the idolatrous priest of Bethel, said to the prophet Amos, "O thou seer, go, flee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there," the reply of the genuine prophet of Jehovah was very significant: "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdman, and a dresser of sycamore trees: and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people." In other words: "I am no professional ecclesiastic, I am not preaching for popularity or money; I am come to deliver the message which the Lord God himself has laid upon my heart." (Amos vii. 10-15.)

There may well be a painful shrinking from the requirements and responsibilities of such a position. One must feel his insufficiency. Gladly perhaps would we

be excused. But this feeling of "weakness and fear and much trembling" is not inconsistent with the longing and the determination, in the power of the Spirit, to preach Christ crucified.

(3) In the *signs of preaching.* The living word of God will quicken the spirits of all who have ears to hear it. The apostles "went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed." It must ever be so. "Neither could I be satisfied," says John Bunyan, "unless some fruit did appear in my work. If I were fruitless it mattered not who commended me; but if I were fruitful, I cared not who did condemn." True, there will be outward and incidental differences between the signs of New Testament times and those of our own. Similarly will there be outward and incidental differences between the confirmatory signs of one man's preaching and those of another's in the present day, or even between the signs that appear under the same man's preaching in different periods of his ministry. Bishop George F. Pierce said that if the Lord should let him preach a year without the conversion of some soul, it would break his heart. These, indeed, are the most notable proofs of the power of God in the gospel—the awakening and salvation of sinners. Blessed above his fellows is the man whose ministry is rich in such results. Not professions of conversion, but conversions: these are the preacher's crown of joy. But not these alone: much more may be given him. "For now we live, if ye *stand fast in the Lord,* . . . night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face, and *may perfect that which is lacking in your faith*" (1 Thess. ii. 19; iii. 8-10).

We may look, then, for other confirmatory signs of preaching besides conversions. There will be committed to our care thousands of persons who are already in the Christian life. To make that life more luminous and attractive, to guide the perplexed soul, to strengthen faith in its time of trial, to nurture the beginnings of spiritual character in the hearts of little children, to lead the weakest disciple into whole-hearted devotion to his Lord—this also is to have a fruitful ministry. To hear those to whom we minister say, "I thank you for that strong and helpful sermon," "Your preaching makes me desire more than ever to be a Christian," "I feel the force of that truth as never before," and to see the betterment in their lives—these are seals to our ministry. "He that prophesieth speaketh unto men *edification and comfort and consolation.* . . . He that prophesieth edifieth *the church*" (1 Cor. xiv. 3, 4).

Even silence may be a sign. Deep convictions are often undemonstrative. To them any speech for a time may seem but babbling. One of the best evidences that the sermon has gone straight to the conscience may be that the people talk less on their way home.

Let us learn more of Jesus. He knew himself to be the ill-understood Christ upon whom Israel had been taught to hope, the Son of God in whom the Father was well pleased, the Minister and Deliverer of men. His path lay plain before him. He saw it all—the pain, the solitariness, the bitter and shameful cross, the burden of the world's sin. But without one swerving or doubtful step did he tread the appointed way. The unity of his life was perfect—one purpose, one plan, one fulfillment. It was his joy to do the will of the Father who had sent him into the world. Therefore,

on the night of the betrayal, in his prayer for the Church, he could say, "I have glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do."

What, then, is the determinative element in the succession of Christian preachers? Not a sacrament, or an ordination, or anything that the Church can do, or an historical continuity, or any external thing whatsoever; but the *inner vocation.* In the Fourth Gospel it is written: "There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light." So likewise did the prophets that were before him, as they watched and waited for the day of the Lord; so did the apostles that came after him, with the glory of that day upon them; so it has been with their successors even unto the present time—sent from God to bear witness of the true Light that, coming into the world, lighteth every man. These all are kindred souls. Each generation of them receives much from its predecessors. The spirit of the fathers is perpetuated in their sons. All along the line the holy fire kindles and advances, from soul to soul, from age to age. But the point of unity, the tie of spiritual lineage, is in the common Divine call to a common work.

PART SECOND

IN THE INMOST LIFE

"One half hour humbly prostrate on my face, to converse with eternity. And such deep views and bright conceptions of eternal things I never had before in all my life. But I must go; the congregation is assembled, and my watch says eight minutes to twelve o'clock. Farewell, sweet and solemn place! *Lord Jesus, go with me.* Amen. Amen."—McKENDREE.

"Resolved, Never to do anything which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life."—JONATHAN EDWARDS.

"Disinterested love to God and man waxes stronger in itself and in comparison with other motives. This is the simplicity that is in Christ."—GRANBERY, *Experience the Crowning Evidence of the Christian Religion.*

"No man presumes in that to which he was born;
Less than the gift to claim would be the giver to scorn."

"Our outward lips confess the Name
All other names above;
Love only knoweth whence it came,
And comprehendeth love."

—WHITTIER, *Our Master.*

I

The Inner Chamber

The senses, and even the natural affections, are ever inclined to become usurpers. Not content with their own large and fair provinces, they try continually to get the upper hand of the intellect and the spirit. Unchecked they would make us animals, who were intended to be Christians.

Hence the man who purposes to live an intellectual life finds it necessary to withdraw regularly from the outer world, both material and human, with its incessant appeals. Not otherwise can he hope to move unhindered along the elusive lines of thought. The art of talking calls for an audience, or at least for a companion; the art of thinking is best practiced alone. The student requires a study and study hours: his companion is the angel of silence.

Shall it be thought a strange thing, then, that the spiritual life also must have its daily withdrawal from people and outward things? "Enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret." Without it we shall soon become actors in religion. Unawares the fever and falsehood of the world will infect our life.

True, there may be a seclusion of spirit amid the busiest scenes and engagements. "So I prayed," says Nehemiah, "unto the God of heaven." It was while standing officially before the Persian king, offering him the wine-cup, answering his inquiries, making request to be sent as a rebuilder to far-distant Jerusalem. For

prayer is not simply an act, but also a disposition; and out of this devotional spirit the actual prayer, like the "sons of the flame" that fly upward, may arise at any time. Similarly one might say that thought is thoughtfulness, a tone and attitude of the mind. Nevertheless the intellectual life would be extremely poor, if deprived of its seasons of thinking; and so, likewise, would be the spiritual life without its seasons of praying. Are they not necessary to sustain the prayerful attitude of the soul?

Not altogether commendable, indeed, is the sentiment,

> Far from my thoughts, vain world, begone,
> Let my religious hours alone.

Because if only some hours of one's life be religious, none are truly so. But there are Sabbath days, and consecrated buildings, and ordained ministers of the gospel, and family ties: and to be in the spirit on the Lord's day helps us to be in the Spirit on all days; to feel the sacredness of a church edifice helps us to feel the sacredness of the whole earth; to see the Divine purpose in the work of the ministry helps us to see that same purpose in all good callings; to love the members of our own household not contracts but humanizes the heart. In like manner, out of the silent hour of prayer will come—reverent and spiritual pulpit prayers? Yes. Pulpit speech thrilling with devotional fervor and uplifting the hearts of sympathetic hearers in the worship of God? Yes. But much more: a sense of the sacredness of the whole round of daily life, so that whatever we do—though it should be the homeliest drudgery of the slave—may be done heartily as unto the Lord. "I tell you," said Tauler, the devout mystic, "if I were not

a priest, I would esteem it a great gift that I was able to make shoes, and I would try to make them so well as to be a pattern to all."

Let each of us ask, What is my capacity for solitude? It is possible to have almost none. Restless and miserable are some persons except when in society. Destitute of personal resources, they find in retirement only conscious poverty. Social excitement, business, talk are their necessary food. Others are able, through the magic aid of a book, to people solitude with images and ideas, and are well content to be thus alone. Others, again, through sheer sluggishness find it a relief to have nothing to do, not even talking, while vagrant thoughts go gliding feather-footed through the mind. Solitude in itself is neither good nor evil. It may be the cherishing mother of malice and impurity: "his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad he telleth it." On the other hand, it may furnish the condition for the most beneficent creative activity of the soul.

Close akin to prayer, inciting and maintaining it, is devotional meditation. This is not logical analysis or argumentation, though it may well accompany such intellectual processes. It is not reverie, mental drifting, nor, least of all, is it mental vacancy. There must be something—some fact or truth—to meditate upon. Dr. George Matheson, the blind preacher of Edinburgh, in his little book of devotion, "Voices of the Spirit," has said: "The wings on which the spirit soars must always be wings of thought. Therefore in every one of these meditations I have endeavored to express a distinct idea." But the different phases of the spiritual life which he thus sets forth have been shown him, each and all, by some word of Scripture, as he has taken it unto

himself: "I have not sought out these phases; I have allowed them to find me."

Meditation is of the spirit, not of the pure intellect. It is an activity of conscience and of faith, a knowing through love, a spiritual insight, bidding welcome to every moral suggestion, every holy aspiration, every word of truth, as these come to us—light breaking out of the deep darkness, we know not how, any more than we know how the soul itself rises up in consciousness. But we may know whence they come, even from the Father of our spirits speaking within. They are not of us, but are given to us. It is ours to invite them, to cherish them, to obey them, or not. "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I should know how to sustain with words him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth my ear to hear as they that are taught" (Isa. l. 4).

Meditation—definable, according to the etymology of the word, as getting at the heart of things, feeling one's way into the *midst* of a truth—dares to make us acquainted with ourselves. It sets us face to face with our own personality and character; and here is next to the greatest of all discoveries, *oneself*. I do not say, indeed, that it is made in solitude alone; but certainly it is not made in society alone. Both solitude and society are necessary.

It is sometimes said that self-examination is of questionable value—that the healthy soul, like the healthy body, is unconscious of itself. But this criticism is valid only as applied to the abuse, or overuse, of such introspection. To make a daily register of moods and emotions is surely unwise. To keep asking oneself, How do I feel to-day? does my joy abound? does my

heart glow with love to the Saviour? is more likely to produce hypochondria than sanity and holiness of heart. That was good advice which a plain-spoken pastor—one of the wisest and most faithful I have ever known—gave to a despondent soul. "Oh, I have been seeking religion for years, and have not found it yet," was the lament. "Quit seeking religion: seek God," was the reply.

"Thy faith hath saved," I read, and turned
Full on my soul an anxious eye;
"Hast thou this faith?" I said, and burned
For years, until she made reply:
"Through all my depths profound
Have I explored;
Not faith, but God, I found—
God and his Word."

But to stand alone with conscience, that we may listen in silence to the voice of the Righteous One—this is so far from being a source of spiritual disease that it is demanded by a vigorous and progressive spirituality. What is the life I am living? what motives do I respond to? am I truthful? do I pamper myself in a moderate voluptuousness? have I given way to ill temper again? O Spirit of God, am I grieving thee by any evil or doubtful habit?—If such heart-searching be unprofitable, then must prayer itself be vain.

To know oneself is to know others also. "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" He that understands the parable of his own experience has the key of interpretation to all the parables of the inner life. The author who startles us by the disclosure of some lurking jealousy or other secret meanness of our nature, or wakens an indescribable delight by giving word-form to some pleasing idea or longing of the heart

which for us had never found expression before—shall we suppose that he made this discovery at an evening party, or on 'change, or jostling the crowd in some thoroughfare of the city? Most probably it is a paragraph from the book of his own heart that he is transcribing. So with the preacher, when here and there in the congregation men and women are ready to ask, Who has told him about me? His own heart has told him. Therefore, by our very withdrawal from men into the inner chamber of Divine communion we are drawing nearer to them, and looking not indeed into their faces, but into their souls.

Meditation is not theological systemizing or research. It is preëminently the contemplation of Christ, the laying hold of that knowledge of the Eternal that has come into the world through the Son of Man. We have the book of his life, the testimony of those who companied with him; and his own testimony is, "I and the Father are one." The great Latin theologian, Augustine, tells a dream that he had while engaged in writing his discourse on the Trinity. He seemed to be wandering along the seashore lost in thought, when suddenly he saw a child carrying water to fill a hole that had been dug in the sand. "What is the object of your task?" inquired the theologian. The child said that he intended to empty into this little cavity all the waters of the ocean. "Impossible!" exclaimed Augustine. "Not more impossible," replied the child, "than for thee, O Augustine, to explain the mystery on which thou art thinking." Vain the attempt to comprehend the humblest life that moves on the face of the earth: who then by searching can hope to find out the Living Maker to perfection?

It is high as heaven; what canst thou do?
Deeper than Sheol; what canst thou know?

To receive Him who has spoken in his Father's name—that we can do; so much of the Infinite God as appears in the human life of Him who is "the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance"—that shall be our lifelong study and joy.

So may we find God. Not in space, here or there. In the uttermost part of the sea, or upon the farthest star in the sky, we should be no nearer him than in our own workroom or in our own living room on the familiar earth. We might have beheld the wonders of Pentecost in the Holy City, and laughed with the scoffers. Looking upon the face of Jesus, seeing his mighty works, hearing his gracious words, we might have protested with certain of his hearers, "Nay, but he deceiveth the people," and known nothing of the disciple's experience who said, "God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." We might hold handfuls of the relics of saints, or build churches above martyrs' graves, in a spirit that would hunt other men down to death for the crime of living out the faith that is in them. It is a false witness that cries, Lo, here! and Lo, there! The kingdom is within; there is the moral empire of the Ruler of the universe, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot see or touch the living soul of our friend; nor could we, though every nerve cell of his brain and every tissue of his heart were made visible. Nevertheless we meet him in fellowship, soul with soul. So, likewise, there is no outward observatory from which we could ever see the face of God; but "spirit with spirit can meet," surely the Infinite Spirit with the spirit that he has made. In the holi-

ness and sublimity of the Moral Law, in the spiritual excellence which we know to be far above us and yet not alien or impossible to our experience, in the mediating Christ, through his Gospels without and his Spirit within, there shines the light of the knowledge of God. Every pang of penitential sorrow, every longing for a perfect heart, every thrill of adoring love, every Christ-like endeavor for the highest good of our fellow-men, is our personal response to the touch of the Divine Person upon us. When the psalmist cried out, "My soul is athirst for the living God," it was because God was already in his soul.

Through the court of the Tabernacle, through the Holy Place, and into the Holy of Holies, passed the Hebrew high priest, with incense and sacrificial blood, and stood for a few awful moments in the realized presence of the God of Israel. We are tabernacles of the Most High, and our spiritual consciousness is the Holy of Holies: there the Shekinah light is ever shining, the self-revelation of Him by whose Spirit and in whose image we are made.

Calamities may threaten. The thing you feared may have come upon you, and the desire of your eyes have been taken away at a stroke. But the Lord, the everlasting God, who gives and takes away, remains evermore; and your real life, beyond the reach of vicissitude and disaster, is in him. We may tell him even our doubts and questionings, the trials of the mind, the infirmities of faith, the forebodings of fear—why not?—and reverently pour our whole heart at the feet of the All-merciful. Thus did the men of God in the olden time: "I will say unto God my Rock, Why hast thou forgotten me?" (Psa. xlii. 9); "O Lord, how long shall I cry and

thou wilt not hear?" (Hab. i. 2); "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee: yet would I reason the cause with thee: wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?" (Jer. xii. 1). Shall we so doubt our God as to hide anything from him, as if we durst not tell all? The little child clinging to the hand of its father, or folded in the arms of its mother, is the work of his creative Spirit in human hearts, and a sign of the relation of parent and child alike to the heavenly Father. But how can it be, when we are not only dependent but sinful? If we confess our sins, he will forgive and save us. Greatest of all his mercies, without which all others would fail to meet our need, in him is salvation from the sinful self.

The conscious presence of the Highest will destroy vain thoughts about ourselves and make us *humble-minded.* For humility is inseparable from reverence, and in fact consequent upon it: in reverence we look up, in humility we know that we are looking *up.* Associate with those who range below you in knowledge or ability, and you may soon get beside yourself with intellectual pride. Live with great minds, and unless incurably egotistic, you will come to recognize your own place. The bright boy of the country school supposes himself to have a genius for scholarship; but when at college he enters the classroom of a real scholar, and is brought into familiar association with superior students, he is overcome with the sense of his ignorance and incapacity. Accept a social standard of character—honesty, decency, kindliness, honor; or an ecclesiastical standard—attendance upon the ordinances of the Church and submission to its authority; give heed to no vision of that which is still higher, no sense of supreme excellence, no

infinite outlook. You can live up to such an aim, for it is quite attainable; and inasmuch as many fall below it, you may soon be found on the highroad to Pharisaism.

When we are told that the classic nations of antiquity had no appreciation of the Christian grace of humility, but were even without a word in their languages to express it, the explanation is easy enough. The revelation of the Divine perfections in Jesus, the Son of God, had not been given them. How could they learn reverence and humility in the adoration of deities on their own moral level?

There were many Pharisees at the baptism of John. They seem to have been as good as they wished to be. Did they not keep the law, even as it was enormously augmented by the traditions of the ancients? Who else honored it so highly? The young man who stood facing them there in the Jordan valley may be classed with the noblest spirits in the world's history. Austerely pure and abstinent; a true hero, master of himself, devoted and fearless. The characterization of John Knox by the Regent of Scotland would have been easily applicable to this first great reformer of the Christian age: "There lies a man," he said, standing by the open coffin, "who never feared the face of man." For hundreds of years the voice of prophecy had been hushed, but now at last the hour had come and the herald of the King appeared. The heart of the nation was aroused. A little encouragement, and the people would have followed him as their Messianic leader. But John was no less humble than fearless. "Who art thou?" they asked. John confessed, "I am not the Christ." "Art thou Elijah?" *I am not.* "The prophet?" *No.* "Who art thou?" And he answered, "I am the voice of

one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord": *I am but a voice, a viewless and intangible thing, whose whole significance is in the word that is uttered; look upon the Holy and Mighty One who is coming, whose very feet I am unworthy to touch.*

What made the contrast between the Baptizer and the Pharisee? John lived in the daily presence of the infinite Law of Duty, of the holy Christ who was coming into the world, of the All-perfect One. How could he be vain, or proud, or self-righteous?

Unfit are we for the Lord's work save as we are emptied of self-worship. For that work is a witness-bearing; and how can a man be true to such a trust, the showing of the Light of the world to men, if he stand between them and the Light? Then only do we begin to preach the Name of Christ, when we do not try to win a name for ourselves. Never perhaps was a city more excited with admiration of great preaching in its leading church than was Constantinople under the ministry of its eloquent bishop, John Chrysostom. What was the secret of his power? One element of it was suggested by the spirit in which he received the clapping and shouting in which the people were inclined to indulge under his preaching: "When as I discourse I hear myself applauded, at the moment indeed I feel it as a man (for why should I not own the truth?). I am delighted and give way to the pleasurable feeling; but when I get home, and bethink me that those who applauded receive no benefit from my discourse, but that whatever benefit they ought to have got they lost it while applauding and praising, I am in pain, and groan, and weep, and feel as if I had spoken in vain" ("The Acts of the Apostles," Hom. xxx.); "What need have I of these plaudits, these cheers and

tumultuous signs of approval? The praise I ask is that ye show forth all I have said in your works" ("To the People of Antioch," Hom. ii. c. 12). And if it be asked whence came the chastened spirit that made this man great in the kingdom of heaven, we have only to note the time which he spent in devout retirement before entering upon his public work, and that nearness to the Master whom rather than men he strove to please, that appeared in all his life, till the last happy hour when, an exile for righteousness' sake in a dreary land, he died with the doxology upon his lips, "Glory be to God in everything! Amen." The conscious presence of God will make any man strong in humility.

We shall be saved also in the still hour of prayer from a *fretful mind.* As life is impossible without the constant exposure of our persons to death, so is it impossible without the constant exposure of our minds to annoyance. A thousand untoward circumstances beset us, summer and winter, day and night. In health, in business matters, in domestic economy, in the ever-present but ever-changing weather, above all in the actions of the men and women about us, are numberless things that we should prefer to have different. Very sensitive are we to them, in nerve and mind. What then? Shall we kick against every obstacle, take to heart each several inconvenience, complain of all conditions and circumstances that fall short of ideal perfection? If that be our spirit, the moral disease will deepen and spread till we spontaneously go hunting for ills and inconveniences, and imagining where we do not find them. "Fret not thyself: it tendeth only to evil." O psalmist of Israel, thine was the Heaven-taught wisdom.

It may be that we have never been fully awakened to

the sin of fretting. We think it strange that Wesley should have said that his conscience would no more let him fret than it would let him swear. Will our consciences, then, permit us to practice either of these evil habits unrebuked? Or do we deny that fretting is evil? That would be to hold that we may guiltlessly impair our health—for it is fretting rather than industry that, as the word itself means, *eats away* the life; that we may guiltlessly rob our spirits of the sweetness and repose of moral energy; that we may guiltlessly murmur at the providential ordering of our lives—for fretting is acrid murmuring: that in all these ways we may guiltlessly unfit ourselves for duty and happiness. "If the son of peace be there," Jesus said concerning the homes into which his ministering disciples should enter. "My peace I give unto you," was his word to the disciples themselves. The heavenly calm of that Presence cannot abide with a fretful temper.

Shall we wait for some supreme joy to fill our hearts to the exclusion of all that irritates and annoys? or, alas! for some terrible grief to render all lesser troubles meaningless? That is not the better way. Accept the wise and witty advice that there are two classes of things which one ought not to worry over—those that can be helped, and those that cannot. Read great books.

> The tidal wave of deeper souls
> Into our inmost being rolls,
> And lifts us unawares
> Above all meaner cares.

Let the heavens be teacher. Throw open your window and look up to those fathomless depths of peace that would win the soul away to its foreordained rest in the bosom of God. Consider the lilies of the field. Kneel

at the cross of the Peace-giver, and follow him in newness of life. Then will the kingdom of heaven appear as the great spiritual reality to which our life belongs—in which kingdom, indeed, is sympathy and sorrow and strenuous endeavor, but no peevishness or worry.

Thus, moreover, will the spirit become attentive and *quick to hear the word of God.* What has come to men in the quiet hour of reflection? Mechanical inventions that have revolutionized the industries of the world. Theology, eloquent speech, poetry—the whole of literature. These are fruits of solitary, brooding thought—

Most silent mother of all sounding songs.

But there is something closer to our present purpose. "In the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias *in the wilderness.*" It may come to the prepared spirit at any time, amid any of the affairs and employments of life, on the street, in conversation, in the pulpit: "I am continually with Thee: Thou hast holden my right hand." But very favorable is the hour of prayerful meditation. For this more than any other is the hour of spiritual listening and uplooking. Ask, and it shall be given you.

No doubt the habitual looking upon what is physically lofty tends to ennoble the mind. To live or to journey among the mountains may give intellectual and moral elevation. Was it on this account that the people of Israel were led out of Egypt immediately to a mountain land, there from the awful summits of Sinai, "the mountain of God," to receive their holy law? However this may be, it is certain that the uplifted heart will be receptive of the word of heavenly truth. "I will lift up my eyes unto the mountains: from whence shall my help come?"

We have much to say about studying sermons. Probably not too much, since the work of preparation for the pulpit requires patient and logical thought. Think the sermon through. *Get* the truth. But equally important is it that we should always be ready to *receive* the truth. Not, indeed, that the receptive state is a state of entire passivity. That is the error of mysticism. The empty hand must not be folded in the lap, but put forth. It is in the love and longing for the truth that we may expect to receive it, with a spiritual not a vacant mind, with the attent "ear of him that is taught."

Solitude may be intellectual or even religious, and yet be self-regarding rather than truly Christian. The man of learned and literary leisure may seek it for the philosophic calm which it affords. The religious fanatic may renounce alike the joys and the burdens of society, and flee to the desert, that he may escape temptation and give undivided attention to the saving of his own soul. But such is not the way of the preacher. He retires from the world not that he may get rid of it, but that he may prepare for more effective service in it. He is not a Jonah fleeing across the high seas; he will promptly set his foot in populous Nineveh, and rejoice in the repentance of the inhabitants. His solitude is for others' sake no less than for his own. He would thereby strengthen himself for strength-giving, and find some hid treasure to share with his fellows. Is it not the Master's method? "What I tell you in the darkness"—the world shut out—"speak ye in the light: and what ye hear in the ear"—sitting alone at the Teacher's feet—"proclaim upon the housetops" (Matt. x. 27).

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II

Temptations

Parents are sometimes glad to have their sons enter the ministry, because of what they believe to be the spiritual safety in a sacred calling. Very different were the views of those observers in mediæval times who asked, "Can an ecclesiastic be saved?" Somewhere between these two extremes the truth may be found. The life of a Christian minister does furnish certain moral safeguards and incentives to holy living; for it is distinctively a life of meditation, on the one hand, and of active usefulness, on the other. But to regard it as a sort of charmed inclosure, forefended from evil and danger, is sheer delusion. It is not an Eden; and even if it were, the Serpent would be there.

To escape the dangers of one situation in life by turning to another, is to incur some new danger. Take the farmer boy from his furrow, and through a liberal education put in his hands the keys to the kingdom of letters; let him know what men have thought and written; and while you lift him above the influence of some temptations, just as certainly will you bring him within the reach and range of others. Every calling and every situation has its peculiar besetting sins. There is no exception. I have heard a missionary to China say: "Do not imagine it an easy thing for the missionary to be a good man. I tell you, it is hard to be a Christian in a heathen land." The minister may and should become one of the very best and greatest of men; the parson must be the *person* of the community, as his name sug-

gests; but he may forsake his work, "having loved this present world," or, what is more likely to occur in our day, live and die a backslider in the ministry.

Let me say a word, therefore, concerning the preacher's temptations.

1. *Vanity.* In most employments this could not be called a chief temptation. The merchant, for example, does his work in private, and without occasion for either popular applause or disfavor. The idolatry of money will probably prove to be his besetment. But as a minister of the gospel, you must needs live in the very eyes and ears of men; besides, the work in which you appear before them brings into action the highest and most pleasing qualities of mind, heart, and speech; and you cannot be unaware that "the children of thy people talk about thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak to one another," either in admiration or disparagement. What more common inquiry of one who has just heard a sermon than, "How were you *pleased?*"

Moreover, there is nothing wrong in the desire of esteem. It needs to be directed and kept within right limits, not eradicated. Some grateful recognition of the effort to serve is due the faithful soul. It was morbid in Ignatius of Antioch to say, "They that speak to me in the way of commendation scourge me." Let us value kind words, both in our ears and upon our own lips. Vanity is not the desire for intelligent and loving recognition; it is the lust of praise.

But just here, in the innocent desire of esteem, lurks a danger. The subtle and persistent temptation may arise, to seek men's praises instead of seeking *them.* In the preparation of the sermon, it will start the inward inquiry, "What will the people think? will this be

regarded as a novel idea? will the sermon increase my reputation?" Just before its delivery, if all the conditions are not favorable, the spirit of vanity will prompt an apology (the suggested inference being that, under favorable circumstances, an extremely able discourse might be expected). In the act of preaching, it will keep back our thoughts from the truth and the people, to detain them upon the manner of utterance. After the sermon, it will lead us, despite good resolutions to the contrary, to angle for compliments from our hearers. We will ask their opinion, when the secret design is to draw forth their encomiums; or will speak modestly of our abilities, in hope of contradiction. It is as if a person should take his stand in front of a shop window, ostensibly to examine the articles there exposed for sale, but really to look at his own face or figure mirrored in the glass. Thomas Chalmers wrote this confession in his diary: "Thought of the sins that most easily beset me; confessed them, and prayed for correction and deliverance. They are, . . . above all, a taste and appetite for human applause. My conscience smote me on the subject of pulpit exhibitions. I pray that God will make usefulness the grand principle of my appearances there."

One of the most hateful offshoots of this evil growth is *jealousy*. The jealous tongue is dumb to all true and generous appreciation of one's compeers. It is sparing of sympathy, but outspoken in unkind or unnecessary criticism. Of the brother who is attracting large congregations, it says, "To be sure, but he is no thinker"; of one whose power of thought and solidity of character are beyond question, the equally ready abatement is made: "He is not a popular preacher—congregations

very small." The criticisms may be either true or false, either exact or exaggerated, but it is certainly true that the spirit which prompts them bears no kinship to that love which "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up," and bids us in honor prefer one another.

It would be hard to conceive of a place where the spirit of vanity is more inappropriate and damaging than in the pulpit. All high art requires the absorption of the worker in his work. "The power of the masters is in self-annihilation." The leader in any enterprise must magnify his cause to the minifying and forgetting of himself. What would be thought of a general who in the crisis of battle should be concerned about the gracefulness of his carriage or the cheers of his troops? What, then, must be the condemnation of the preacher, commissioned of God, the message of mercy and of judgment upon his lips, who seems supremely interested in making an exhibition of himself? What sort of leader is he in the militant Church of Christ?

Nevertheless there is not a little ignoble vanity in the pulpit. In some instances, it seems to be the one fatal impediment that keeps back the gifted and energetic from that commanding height of ministerial power to which they are called. Bascom said that fame had ruined him. A wonderful preaching genius of our own day, looking back upon his life with a broken heart, made a similar confession. "I have a reputation to win," or "I have a reputation to sustain," has been the spreading spot of corruption in many a sermon and in many a character. It must disqualify the soul for the vision of God: "How can ye believe, which receive glory one of another?"

2. *Indolence.* Though the Anglo-Saxon race is in

the lead of the world for energetic enterprise, yet the best representative of this leading race within the circle of your acquaintance will confess, under examination, that labor is irksome. The motives to human exertion are the most powerful that can be conceived. On the animal plane there is hunger. Then, as men develop in heart and character, the highest of all motives become operative—conscience and love. But less powerful motives would be inadequate even to the purposes of civilization.

Indolence is living in the passive mood. Not, however, doing absolutely nothing. It is refusing to overcome resistance. The question is not, "Am I doing something?" but, "Am I doing my work? am I traveling or sauntering, sailing or drifting?" If some part of one's work has become so familiar and easy as no longer to require the successive efforts of the will, it is in order that he may go on to other and higher work that does require exertion. It is hard for the very young child to walk. He grows tired, and has to persevere through difficulty and failure. By and by the right use of his limbs becomes painless and automatic; but now he finds other tasks set him—to talk, to read, to write, to serve his superiors, to earn a livelihood. So will it be, if he is faithful, even to old age. Always something to attempt.

Indolence, let us sorrowfully acknowledge, is a characteristic temptation of Christian preachers. Many are given to lounging; not necessarily on the streets or in the business houses of their church members; perhaps in parlors, perhaps in their own homes, perhaps over their books.

One reason for their indolence is that the work to be done, though through faithfulness it may become per-

fect freedom, is peculiarly difficult. It taxes one's powers to the uttermost—nerve, intellect, heart, will. Hence the temptation to let it lie undone, or else to look for some less vital and genuine way of doing it. To permit the thoughts of other men, in book or newspaper, to float languidly through the brain, to perform rites, to utter stereotyped expressions, to talk diffusely or at random—this is not hard; and accordingly this, or the like of it, is the indolent minister's substitute for the real work of his calling.

Another reason: The minister has no man to call him to account in these things. The employment of his time and the manner of doing his work are largely under his own control. He is not required to report at an office or behind a counter, at a certain fixed hour every morning, or to spend several successive hours daily at his desk, on pain of dismissal. Nobody dare say to him, "Go to work." He may repeat the same dead sermon and the same dead prayer; may enter his pulpit half prepared or unprepared; may let his people bear their own burdens—and still retain his charge, or find another. Is it not because of the tendency to sloth in the man who is master and manager of his own time that the apostle exhorts, "He that *ruleth,* with *diligence*"?

The chosen hours for our most exacting mental work are in the morning. Let us guard and cherish them for this purpose. There will be unavoidable interruptions; lighter occupations may come in as a momentary rest and refreshment to the mind: but let it be our rule to give the best of the day to that work which requires the greatest concentration of thought and expenditure of nervous energy. It does not take long to learn how these precious morning hours may be wasted. To rise

a little late, to eat an unsuitable breakfast, to read the newspaper, to walk to the post office and spend some minutes in conversation with a friend, to finish the chapter in yesterday's book, to stroll through the garden, to write a letter, to dispatch some matter of business—and behold, it is high noon, and the true work of the morning undone. This is not to study, not to produce mental wealth; but only to wander inertly within sight of the boundless tides of religious thought, and pick up any flotsam and jetsam, not too heavy, that may be thrown in our way. It is to despise one of God's universal and most precious gifts—to kill or misuse *time.*

Nor do we need to take refuge in the opposite extreme of overwork. Still less to cultivate a clatter of excitement and hurry. Overwork and hurry are themselves destructive of time. Steadiness, self-control, system, the wise direction of effort, patient and rejoicing persistence in the supreme endeavor of life—let this be our way. The work before us is of infinite magnitude, and the time is short. Soon the Master will pronounce upon each of us his word either of approval or of condemnation. "Faithful" or "Slothful"—which shall it be?

3. *Formalism.* We can hardly imagine an Old Testament prophet in danger of becoming a formalist. He had no fixed and regularly recurring times of public service. He dwelt apart; and when the word of Jehovah came to him with constraining power, he went forth and delivered it to the people. Then back again to retirement. The priest, on the other hand, must be at his post day by day, at the hours of the morning and the evening sacrifice, "according to the order of his course." He might easily become a formalist; and it

mattered little, for his work could be done mechanically. But the prophet's work could not. Unless he brought his soul into contact with the souls of the people, as a way of communication for the living word of God, nothing was accomplished.

Now let us abolish the priest's office, and put the prophet in his place, with appointed and regular hours for offering the sacrifice of praise and communicating the word of God through preaching. In these circumstances, he too may easily lapse into formality. For suppose the hour should come and the man not be ready. Suppose his mood should be low, and no word of God astir in his heart. Still he must serve—must speak; he cannot say to the assembled congregation, "I have no message for you to-day, let me retire and wait upon God." So he repeats perfunctorily what he has perhaps known and felt at other times; and when this becomes a habit, we have "the humming of the pulpit drone," deeply wronging the people.

The encroachments of this deathful spirit are very insidious; and there is no preacher—no prophet of the dispensation of the Spirit—but needs to be on his guard against it. Because not only is his association with sacred things constant and unavoidable, not only is the church his home, the Bible his text-book, preaching his business, the supreme spiritual realities the familiar themes of his thought; but two or three times every week comes the inexorable demand for speech, in the congregation, on these momentous truths. What is the effect? First, he will acquire an ever-increasing facility in the use of significant religious words; but also, with equal pace, his heart *may* become less sensitive to them. "Our office," says one whose delight in the work

of the gospel seemed never to suffer variation or decline, "instead of helping our piety, as some assert, is, through the evil of our nature, turned into one of its most serious hindrances; at least I find it so. How one kicks and struggles against officialism, and yet how easily doth it beset us, like a long garment that twists about the racer's feet and impedes his running." (Spurgeon's "Lectures to My Students.") "At least I find it so." A Spurgeon struggling against officialism! The most notably natural, single-minded preacher of his age in constant danger of stiffening into a ministerial machine! It is out of the consciousness of this same tendency that Frederick Robertson complains that "the perpetual treadmill necessity of being forever ready twice a week with earnest thoughts on solemn subjects is a task which is quite enough to break down all originality, and convert a race horse into a dray." Shall we, then, sadly resign ourselves, as an inevitable necessity, to the deadening effect of routine? If we do, the *example* of both Spurgeon and Robertson will terribly rebuke us.

Is it impossible, as the Society of Friends have supposed, to combine the two requirements of preaching as the delivery of God's word under the immediate direction and prompting of the Spirit, and the observance of appointed hours for this service? I think not. The Old Testament prophet and priest are gone; the Christian prophet-scribe is now the one chief minister of religion. His office is to proclaim and teach the gospel out of the Scriptures, and out of his own inner life, from Sunday to Sunday. But it may be done. If the prophet-preachers of the preparatory dispensation were divinely qualified for their work, are we to believe that the preachers of the Christian age must seek in vain the

proper qualification for theirs? Such is not the declared purpose of the Author of the gospel. "He giveth more grace." Since Jesus lived and died and was glorified, the Spirit of God, in the fullness of his power, has been an abiding presence in the believing heart. John the Baptizer was more than a prophet, but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than John. Making allowance for varying physical conditions and mental moods, and for all human infirmities, still there need be no formalist in the pulpit. The preacher may so live and walk in the Spirit that when the hour strikes for the public ministration, the man will be ready, sent of God.

4. *Untruthfulness.* Not point-blank lying. I can hardly think it necessary to offer admonition concerning that. But where shall we find the perfect truth-teller? Truth of character is the harmony of our will with the will of God; and one of its expressions is truthfulness, or veracity—the harmony of our words with our beliefs. So it is in proportion as we have truth of character that we shall have truthfulness of speech.

One form of untruthfulness against which the preacher must be on the watch is careless or intentional *inaccuracy of statement.* This is partly due to the subjects with which he has to deal—not matters of fact that have fallen under his own observation, but matters of reason, of reasoning, of faith. Now it is difficult to represent these things, with the best language at our command, accurately (impossible to do it with perfect exactness); and this encourages the tendency to a more or less voluntary inaccuracy—to modifying or misstating the truth, in accordance with the dominant feeling or purpose at the time—

> As messengers lie, with the facts alone,
> Delivering the word and witholding the tone.

But who are we? Messengers of the King of truth; and we must accomplish his ends without the use of unrighteousness, or "sleight of men," or any instrument of the devil. "Will ye speak unrighteously for God, and talk deceitfully for him?"

A similar form of untruthfulness is *exaggeration.* Undoubtedly the hyperbole is a legitimate figure of speech. But the habit of speaking in superlatives is a habit of untruthfulness. It may grow and strengthen till the very power to see things in their true relations is lost. Under the excitement of public speech, overstatement is painfully frequent. A brother whom I once invited to occupy my pulpit said in his sermon—on the text, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might"—"I had rather a man should be a notorious swearer than to be notorious for nothing." How far was that rash and wicked statement from being true!

Nor is exaggeration an element of power. A witty moralist has said that "the way to argue down a vice is not to tell lies about it." The same may be said concerning the establishment of a virtue. Both understatement and over-statement are feeble. The simple and majestic "Yes" and "No" of truth may be trusted without the aid of either asseveration or exaggeration. It only can be trusted for genuine and permanent effect.

I am quite aware that the preacher cannot present all sides of a question, perfectly equipoised, in a single discourse, as if he were a judge delivering his charge to a jury. One phase of the truth must be emphasized to-

day, and another next time. But I also know that many a preacher, in the quiet of the walk homeward, after sermon, has said to himself: "That description was overdrawn; that claim was extravagant; that assertion cannot be maintained." Even in moments of highest excitement, let not the law of truth forsake our lips.

Cant is untruthful. Not confined to the pulpit nor to church members, its characteristic whine may be heard in every walk of life. But religious cant is specially deplorable, and when it appears in the pulpit, specially conspicuous. Cant is the using of high, significant words out of which, in the speaker's use of them, the meaning has departed, the words only remaining. Why should the preacher find a snare set here for his feet? Not because he is guilty of insincerity from the start. But because he cannot fail, in prayer and preaching, to use language expressive of great religious ideas and emotions; he must keep his lips familiar with the phraseology of religion, much of which is sublimely significant; and he may easily, through "the fatal facility of speech," fall into the habit of saying more than he feels or means. Then, if he entertain half consciously such thoughts as, "I ought to feel it, and to express it may help me to feel it, and it is well to make a good appearance and profession," already have his character and speech been corrupted by the deceitful working of cant.

5. *The Surrender of the Ideal.* Let me trace the outline of a too common career. A young preacher enters upon his life work with grand conceptions of its requirements and possibilities. He "seeks not his own, but the things that are Jesus Christ's." He is filled with enthusiasm for souls. To call men to repentance,

to be intrusted with the gospel of the Son of God, to be numbered with the goodly company that in all ages have wrought in word and teaching for the extension of the kingdom of heaven—how his soul exults at the thought! He would not exchange places with a prince. If he may but become fruitful in every good work as a minister of the new covenant, his highest aspiration will be fulfilled; yet to be satisfied with anything less would be impossible.

By and by perhaps his work begins to appear more commonplace than he once supposed that it ever could be. Now that the novelty has worn off, the round of ministerial duties is rather monotonous. A glory has departed from his life. Men do not respond to his appeals as he expected. He cannot see much good resulting from his labors. Moreover, he begins to lose confidence in the piety of certain leading church members. Those who received him so kindly when he came to the charge, and whom he took to be such pleasant examples of Christian character—this one will not pay his debts, that one is a chronic grumbler, another is a slave of ill temper. Some of the recently converted are beginning to show signs of indifference, and he cannot arouse them. He is even tempted to say in his haste that men are not worth the trouble he is taking for them.

Then earthly thoughts and affections begin to reassert their power. The preacher is concerned about personal comforts. He becomes mildly indignant that his pay is so irregular and inadequate. He concludes that the people are not appreciative. Once his word was, "I am for my congregation"; now he is inclined to add, not without emphasis, "And my congregation for me." Once it was, "The kingdom of God," "The joy of doing

good," "The worth of the soul"; now other voices may be heard mingling with these and threatening to put them to silence—"Parsonage," "Salary," "City church," "Good society," "Sacrifices." Alas! he is gravitating earthward—down from the apostolic plane, from Christian love and endeavor, from his grand and true ideal, down to the poor earthly level of mere respectability and official routine. He is coming to satisfy himself with what is hardly good, instead of forever and untiringly seeking the perfect.

Better to die in the joy of our first love and labor for souls than live to fall victim to such a temptation. But why abandon our ideal? Many have done so; but many others have walked in the guiding light of it even unto the end. It was so with Whitefield. Only a short time before his death, he wrote: "Fain would I end my life rambling after those that have rambled away from Jesus Christ. . . . I do not regret being a poor, despised, cast-out, and now almost worn-out itinerant. I would do it again, if I had my choice." On the 29th of September, 1770, weak and ill, he held the attention of a vast audience for nearly two hours: at the rising of the morrow's sun his long itinerancy ended in the Glory beyond. It was so with the Apostle to the Gentiles. Before the eyes of "Paul the aged" still shone, in undiminished glory and power, the vision of his earliest Christian experience. It was on the homeward voyage of his last recorded missionary journey, not of the first, that he declared: "But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Pity the man who laughs at the dreams of his youth,

and thinks it a gain that he has been disenchanted. Either his youth was poor and groveling, or his manhood is worldly, unworthy, untrue. Be not one

> from whose narrow bosom
> The great child-heart has withered.

Live evermore in the faith that is "the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen."

III

The Growth of Consecration

I am my own. This affirmation every man is constantly making. It is a part of our sense of personality. Without it no one would be conscious that he was a person as contradistinguished from a thing. *I am not my own.* Here is another universal affirmation. Of nothing can we be more certain than that we are neither self-created nor self-sufficient. By no skill or energy of ours can one particle of bread turn to blood. Nearly a third of our time must be spent in the dreamy half-death of sleep. Wholly dependent are we upon the Infinite Cause of our being. Moreover, the law of duty under which we live as moral intelligences is no more our law than is that of gravitation in the material world. We could establish or set aside the one just as little as the other.

Now in these two complementary affirmations lies the principle of Christian consecration. We are persons, *our own,* and hence have a self that may be given in service to God; we are creatures, *not our own,* and hence are under obligation to give him this personal service.

The spirit of consecration is shown in our first coming to God. Is it not an element in all genuine repentance? For repentance is a turning to God the Saviour not only that we may be released from sin, but also that henceforth in all things we may serve and please him. True, the penitential cry is, "God be merciful," rather than "God be glorified"; but as the soul passes out of darkness into the light of truth and love, the pur-

pose to do God's will becomes distinct and predominant.

Verily it is a high point of spiritual life that has thus already been reached. Can our footing be made sure on the holy heights?

There may be some painful yet salutary experiences, even after the Lord has counted us faithful, putting us into the ministry. The hour of preaching is come. We rejoice, yet with painful self-distrust. We pray that the name of Christ may be glorified, though our own should be despised: "Let me be put to shame, if need be, so I but preach the preaching thou dost bid me." But we are not put to shame; our hearts are filled with a solemn gladness, and the word is with power. "Now," we say to ourselves, "I can preach; by the help of God I have gained the point." Again the time of preaching is at hand; and we seem to be ready. There is no such heart-searching and self-crucifixion as before (has it not been already done?). But alas! in the midst of the sermon we are forced to confess that unworthy motives have crept in unawares to spoil the sacred service. We have lost the point that we had gained. Our eye has not been single, and the inevitable darkness has fallen.

But the truth that we have now to consider is not the maintenance but the *growth* of consecration. It may be said, indeed, that consecration is and must be perfect at the very first. For it is the sanctification not of this or that faculty or possession, but of ourselves. Suppose a man should say, "I desire above all things to be saved from sin, but am unwilling to do the will of the Lord." His words are self-contradictory: he would rather be a god to himself than to be separated from his sins. Or suppose him to pick and choose among his possessions,

offering some to the Lord, but not the others—his talents but not his time, his time but not his money, one day of the week but not the remaining six, a tithe of his income but not the remaining nine-tenths. If he may conscientiously keep back one power of his being or one portion of his wealth, why not another and another? The consecration of what is implied in becoming a Christian? I know but this answer: Ourselves. But that is our *all.* The idea, the motive, the principle, that lies back of the repentant sinner's prayer, calls for a total and uncompromising self-surrender.

But an idea may grow clearer, a motive may grow stronger, a principle may deepen down into our nature and widen out the sphere of its application more and more. In fact, the Christian who should say, "My attitude toward God is the right attitude, and I will simply maintain it, without enlargement of vision or strengthening of integrity"—would he maintain it? On the contrary, he would soon find that what he had was beginning to be taken away from him. He must make it, through use and improvement, still more his own.

> The holiest bread, if hoarded, soon will breed
> The mammon-moth, the having-pride, I find.

Christian consecration is not a "dead work," a fixed form of observance, but a living principle that needs ever to increase in the power and fruitfulness of life. Wesley said in old age that for many years his Christian experience could be best expressed in the hymn, "O Thou that camest from above"—which is all aspiration. "I do not issue orders to you, as though I were some great person"—thus wrote Ignatius to the Ephesians, on his way to the lions of the Roman amphitheater; "for though

I am bound for the Name, I am not perfect in Christ Jesus. For now I *begin to be a disciple,* and I speak to you as fellow-disciples with me." Ever a new beginning, farther and farther on, even at the gate of martyrdom, is the way of the pupil and servant of our Master. It is from glory to glory, as by the Lord, the Spirit.

Can we trace the directions of this divine growth?

1. *The act of consecration, repeated from day to day, becomes a habit.* Let us discriminate between an act and an attitude of the will. Yonder stands a contestant on the race course, awaiting the signal for the race to begin. He is *doing* nothing, but he *is* much. Note the position of his body, bent toward the goal, ready to fall out of equilibrium at any instant, every muscle adjusted to the directing idea in the mind, every nerve strung to its utmost tension. So, when the signal is given, instantaneously the stored up energy is discharged and the act of running begins. Similar to this bodily attitude is that attitude of will that we call habit. It is not the actual doing of anything, but the readiness to do; so that, on occasion, the deed is done—instinctively, unconsciously sometimes, the deed is done.

Shall we not consecrate ourselves to the Lord's service once for all? Yes, in the sense that we determine, by his grace, never to withdraw the offering; but not in the sense that there is no need, as the days of life come swiftly on, with their opportunities and temptations, of gathering up our energies and repeating the solemn act of self-dedication. At the communion table we are asked to repeat it: "And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto thee." Shall

we not repeat it in the still hour of prayer, as the need of each new day requires? Thus will be formed a holy *habit* of the will, a *state* of the soul, a *character* that will find expression in the daily service of the Lord. It is not given in our spiritual birth any more than natural habits are given in our natural birth. The capacity and the tendency are given; but the formative process, under the good hand of God upon us, is our own.

2. *The contents of the repeated act of consecration become larger and larger.* This from two causes. One is, that as the knowledge of our own being with its endless possibilities, and of the Divine will, deepens, we can better understand what is included in setting ourselves apart to God in his service. Indeed, when shall we learn all that it means? What is this living, spiritual self? and this perfect will of God? No jubilant discoverer in the Transvaal or the Klondike ever lighted upon so rich a find as awaits the man who wants and wills to discover these treasures of the soul. "Some day I shall awake," said a man who was already spiritually awake, "and marvel at my own riches."

Here is a Christian child. So far as he may know, he has given himself to the Saviour. But the circle of the child's knowledge, the range of his consciousness, is incessantly widening. By and by appetites and passions will arise with terrible power in his nature, to be controlled and sanctified. He did not know at first that *that* was involved in the Christian life. Or, it may be, he awakes to the realization of gifts of intellect and speech that must be used in the name of Christ the Lord, not in his own name. Or a lifelong sorrow may be laid upon him to be borne unmurmuringly. Or it may be bidden him to undertake some work of God

among the poor and untaught, or in a distant land. Unquestionably if in the light of this growing revelation he continue to say, "I am thine, O Lord, for service or for sacrifice," the content of the later acts of consecration will be far richer than that of the initial act. Lovely childhood! let it bring its tender leaves and buds of promise to the Lord Jesus; but manhood must lay the swift-appearing fruit upon his altar.

Compare the saints of the New Testament with their predecessors in Israel—John the Baptist with Abraham, John the Apostle with the Psalmists, Paul with David. Which had the deeper insight into the law and love of God, and accordingly were able to offer him the fuller offering? The later saints were the more enlightened. But as it was in the successive stages of the Spirit's ministration of truth to the Church, so is it in the successive years of the individual Christian's life.

Have you to-day no higher idea of the sacredness of time than on the day of your conversion? or, of the right use of money? or, of the obligation to be kind and patient, so that the least harshness or petulance will grieve the conscience? or, of the significance of such a word as that of the Apostle to the Gentiles—"I am debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish"? If, then, you have lived faithfully according to the measure of light vouchsafed, yours has been an ever-increasing self-devotion.

Let us find an illustration in one's call to preach. We shall choose two typical instances. A Christian boy, taking counsel of his Lord, day by day, and doing with a glad heart the thing commanded, may grow up into a preacher of the gospel no less naturally and uninterruptedly than his body grows from childhood to maturi-

ty. Finding himself in possession of the preaching gift and the providential opportunity, he uses these things, just as he uses all things else in his life, "in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by him." Thus may he enter upon his vocation without having had a serious intention of following any other; and thus is he giving his life ever more fully to the Lord.

But in other cases there is a crisis. The call is sudden and unexpected. While the young man is preparing for some so-called secular pursuit that greatly attracts him, or it may be is already following it, the prophet's mantle is flung upon him. When, years before, he covenanted to do the work of the Lord, there was no foreshadowing that this work would include the devotement of his life to the ministry of the gospel. So he is tempted, like the Christian who suddenly comes into the possession of great wealth. What will he do with this new responsibility? If he fail here, he must walk in darkness the rest of his days; therefore it is a critical point in the history of a soul. But if he do not fail, if he follow his convictions, and renew his Christian vows with this great addition to their contents, this critical point becomes a point of vantage and advancement.

The other source of the enrichment of consecration is the increase in our natural powers and acquisitions. Let us again take the preacher as an illustration. He will acquire *knowledge*. Everybody does. The most inert intellect must become increasingly intelligent in a world like ours. Every man is learned in his own line of experience.

But the preacher has exceptional opportunities for ac-

quisition in the higher forms of knowledge. The most fruitful fields in nature, in human nature, in literature, in the Scriptures, lie open before him; and his office itself invites him to enter. I wish it could be said that he rarely fails to respond to what would seem to be a most welcome demand. There is much inexcusable ignorance in the pulpit. But some preachers, from youth to age, are enthusiastic learners. Smitten with the love of knowledge and the passion for truth, appreciative of the intellectual requirements of their ministry, they are ever furnishing themselves more richly for the work of instruction.

After knowledge is *skill*. Asked a thoughtful, ten-year-old boy, on the way from a swimming pond, one summer evening: "If you learn what all the strokes are and how to swim, can you swim?" He had hoped to acquire the art by a careful study of "The Boy's Own Book" at home. But the skill of the swimmer comes only through swimming. Quite remarkable, too, is the development of skill, as the example of every expert—or of every child that has learned to talk, for that matter—may easily prove. Ask the shoemaker to let you drive pegs in the sole upon his last. Simple as the process may seem, the most noteworthy result of your efforts will be the destruction of the pegs. What you lack is not knowledge, but that indefinable and incommunicable skill which only constant practice can infuse into mind and muscle. Similarly the shoemaker, after hearing some practiced extemporaneous speaker whose lucid and forceful words seemed to flow from his lips as naturally as the breath that bore them, might imagine that he could do the same thing—till he made the experiment.

The preacher will acquire more or less aptness in his art, and ought to become thoroughly skillful, "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." He is constantly employed in religious conversation, in literary work, in Scripture exposition, in leading the devotions of the congregation, in exhortation, in preaching; and necessarily he will develop a certain power to do these things; his first awkward attempts will be superseded by a delicacy of touch and a concentration of force that would have been impossible to him without practice. Doing the work of a minister of the gospel, he will learn how to do it.

In the acquisition of knowledge and skill each successive gain becomes itself a means of further increase. The more one knows, the greater the number of his points of aggression upon the unknown; the more he does, the more he is able to do. It is a geometrical progression. The scholar acquires as much in a day as the schoolboy in a month. Let not the young preacher be disheartened at present poverty. When his one talent has become two, the two talents may be multiplied in like manner. Erelong he will be able to master a harder problem in much less time than he must devote to an easier one now; and to get more thoughts and illustrations for the pulpit in an afternoon visit than will be drawn to him now in a whole morning's intellectual toil. "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance."

But here is the danger point. Knowledge and skill uninspired by love are nothing. The spiritual consecration of the preacher must keep pace with his mental development. Otherwise he will unconsciously degenerate into a double-minded man—making the vain en-

deavor to serve both God and self supremely. Sacred forms and professional activity may remain, but his religion will become unreal, his life will slip away from oneness with God. The priest of Jehovah will go ministering also in the groves of Baal. But on the other hand, if he gain all he can of natural knowledge and power, and give all he can—that is, all he has—his life will become an increasingly consecrated life. When young Adam Clarke, on applying for admission into Kingswood School, was asked, "Do you wish to devote yourself entirely to the work of God?" the reply was even better than the question—"Sir, I wish to do and be whatever God pleases." But better still was the enlightened and devoted life that followed. When this crude but eager and knowledge-loving youth was recognized, some years later, as one of the first Oriental scholars of his time, the Christian simplicity of his character showed no sign of corruption. His rapidly increasing knowledge was laid at the feet of his Lord. Adam Clarke went hither and thither as a Methodist itinerant, preaching his five thousand sermons and husbanding every spare moment for the writing of his great Bible Commentary, under the same motive that brought him to Kingswood School—"to do and to be whatever God pleased." Surely it is the perfect Christian method of life.

3. *The motive, or spirit, of consecration intensifies and heightens.* The slave serves from fear; the hireling, for pay; the conscientious stranger, from duty; the son, from love. Thus even of good motives more than one is possible as the explanation of an act. How shall we deal with them? Act upon them, and thereby intensify them all, as need may be—making the feeble

good motive a strong good motive. Moreover, let the lower decrease, but only as the higher, increasing, will infuse a still better spirit into the conduct of life.

With what motive do we set ourselves apart for the service of God, that of the hireling or that of the son? Jesus tells in one of his parables of a householder who went out at different hours of the day to hire laborers for his vineyard. And at the close of the day there was complaint among the laborers as to their respective wages. Those who had worked all day were ready to protest that either they should receive more or the others less. They were not slaves, but neither were they sons; they were hirelings; they had the spirit of the hireling; they cared nothing for the vineyard or its owner, but only for what they could make for themselves out of the service. (Matt. xx. 1-16.) Are we conscientiously trying to serve the Lord of the vineyard as hirelings? Then let us pray that by the power of Christ and his Spirit we may become something more. Turn to another teaching of Jesus: "A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, Son, go work to-day in the vineyard. . . . And he came to the second and said likewise" (Matt xxi. 28-30. Not a word was said about wages. It was a son—to whom all the father had was ever being freely given—that was asked to go, in loyalty and love, and spend a day in the father's service. Shall not that be the call to which we most promptly and gladly respond? The father himself is the son's reward; the opportunity to serve is the wages of love.

Is not this the Christ-spirit? We know that Jesus lived under compulsion to do the work of God. He said, *I must:* "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house"; "I must work the works of him that sent me";

"The Son of man must suffer many things, . . . and be killed, and after three days rise again." But it was the compulsion of holy love, the *I will* of the like-minded Son who must do and suffer always the things that pleased the Father. As we gain more and more of the filial mind of Jesus, our abandonment to the Father's will becomes more and more vital, and holy, and perfect. *I must* is glorified in *I will*.

Remember, too, that the growth of love, like that of hate, is promoted by exercise. The man who acts unfairly or unkindly toward another will love that other less and less, will dislike him more and more. It is the wronged that are hated. Because every cruel deed reacts upon the doer to make him more cruel. In like manner, every kind deed reacts upon the doer to deepen the principle of kindness out of which it sprang. Do service, willingly accept suffering, for the Lord Jesus Christ, and with the certainty of immutable law your love to him will grow stronger.

Now the Christian preacher needs no special kind of consecration: because his ministerial life is only a part of his Christian life, a less included in a greater. There is no higher vocation than that "heavenly calling" of which all the elect of God are "partakers." Nor can there be two kinds of goodness, one for the ministers of the Church and the other for the lay people. But there is a special *need* of consecration on the part of the minister, because of his larger opportunity for doing good or evil. An untrue soldier is an element of demoralization in an army; but what if the general be faithless? Whether we would have it so or not, our churches are largely what we, their pastors, make them. Again and again did Paul write epistles to the congregations

of which he had become chief overseer; but when he would set forth the duties and joys of religion to one man, it is a *pastoral epistle* that he writes—to Timothy or Titus. When Dr. A. J. Gordon received that anointing of the Holy Spirit of which he tells in his short and simple "spiritual biography," the effect became as notable before long in his congregation as in himself. The church was cleansed from worldly practices, the attendance at prayer meeting filled the room with happy worshipers, the offerings to foreign missions steadily increased, evangelistic efforts were multiplied. So will it ever be. A decline in the power of the pulpit foretokens declension in the spirituality of the church: a revival in the preacher's heart is a revival in the congregation. May God help us! How shall we answer for the churches to which we are appointed, if we be not truly devoted to the work of our ministry—nay, to the Lord and Giver of our ministry?

Even the dust can glorify the sun. In an evening walk you have sometimes seen it thrown up in clouds from the thoroughfare, and have had to pass through it with personal discomfort. But when you turned, looking back toward the sunset, a sudden glory appeared. The sunlight streaming through the rising clouds seemed to turn each several dust-grain into a precious gem—

> Crystal-clear or acloud with mist,
> Ruby, garnet, and amethyst—

whose blended hues made a pathway of splendor as if for angels' feet. The whole earth, in its garment of many-colored light, the far blue mountain range and the daisied sod at our feet, is ever showing the glory of the sun; and even the dust declares it. Dust and ashes

are we, but it is our calling so to shine in the light of our Lord that men looking upon our lives may see him. Accordingly we learn that in his intercessory prayer he said, "I am glorified in them." And what Jesus said of all his disciples Paul has said specifically of those who serve in the ministry of the word: "They are the messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ."

IV

Realization of Sonship

Shall we dwell a little longer upon the thought of sonship to God?

1. *Its revelation in the life of Jesus.* Could we have asked the most illumined prophet of Israel, "What is the relationship of man to God?" a true answer, we need not doubt, would have been given. For to no other men in all the world had come such spiritual knowledge as these men received. Still his answer would have been incomplete; for the prophets knew in part and prophesied in part.

The soul's quest for the knowledge of God is fulfilled in the life of Jesus. He said that to him God was Father. *Said* it? His teaching concerning himself was but one expression of the life of Sonship which he lived. In all that he did and in all that he showed himself to be, the same Divine Nature appeared. No man hath seen God at any time; but in Jesus was life, which, hidden from ages and generations, expressed itself at the appointed time in human personality, and thus became "the light of men," showing them the Father.

To Israel there was given from the beginning a revelation of the God of holiness. The gods of Greece were not supposed to have any moral character. The worshiper brought offerings, to avert their displeasure or to gain their favor, but not with any idea of being made righteous and good by entering into communion with them. They did not demand goodness in their worshipers. How could they? But unto Moses and the proph-

ets was vouchsafed the vision of the Holy One of Israel, the righteous Judge of all the earth. He required that his people should be holy, like himself. This rather than any ritual observance. The expression of his holiness was the Moral Law. Could it be obeyed? No man had ever perfectly kept it; no man was holy as God is holy; the cry for pardon broke from the same lips that raised the hymn of joy and praise. "I have seen an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad." Then there came into the world One who offered no prayer for pardon, because he knew no sin. In Jesus the Law appeared in concrete, living, personal form. Jesus *is* the Law, even unto the end of the world. Who could he be, this Holy One, but the Son of the Highest?

The prophets also saw that God is merciful and loving. "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall my covenant of peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee" (Isa. liv. 10). "I took them on my arms, but they knew not that I healed them" (Hos. xi. 3). Were men like God in loving-kindness? Here, too, very far were the best of men from representing him perfectly. But it was not so with Jesus. He was absolutely without self-seeking, and devoted in infinite compassion to the service of mankind. He was the Love no less than the Law of the invisible God, made manifest in a human life.

Hence it excites no surprise that Jesus should call God Father and walk before him in perfect filial oneness of thought and heart and will.

May we have such fellowship with our Lord that we too may be called children of God? Yes, for he was the

Son of Man, "made in all things like unto his brethren." Potentially every man is a child of God; actually—that is to say, in spirit and character—we become his children by receiving the spirit of Christ into our hearts: "as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John i. 12). Therefore, when Jesus would put the Divine Name upon our lips, he says, "When ye pray say, Our Father who art in heaven"; when he would quiet our anxiety about food and raiment, he tells us that our Father knows our need of these things; when he would guard our hearts against more painful and far-reaching fears, he declares that it is our "Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom."

Then, at the end of the days, came the supreme revelation of the Father-heart of God. For where should we learn that God is love? In nature? No; for love is sacrificial; it is shown in making cost for its objects; and in all this wondrous physical creation we find no sign of the self-giving of God. Though we should see him fling forth the worlds from his almighty creative fingers, we could not feel that it cost him anything. In providence? Here is goodness. He spreads a table for us, and satisfies the hungry with his bounty. But is he not infinitely rich? Giving is no impoverishment to him. Where, then, shall we find the God of love? In human fatherhood and motherhood? Here indeed is a symbol that awakens strange hopes and longings. Especially when the son wanders off into sin and its awful peril, and the father follows him with a breaking heart, making sacrifices, giving up his all, and lays down his life for the wicked son's redemption, or cries in bitterness of soul, "Would to God I had died for thee,

O my son, my son!" Then indeed may arise the thought, "If I could know that God feels for me somewhat as I feel for my ungrateful boy!" But the demonstration of the love of God is in the cross of Jesus. For it is there shown that God does love as a father or a mother—and "how much more"; it is there that we see God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, seeking the lost, grieved for their hardness of heart, taking upon his own heart their burden of sin and woe, making infinite sacrificial cost to save them. "Herein is love, not that we loved God"—ours is unworthy of the name—"but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 10). It was the Father-heart of God that yearned for his children and would bring them to himself by the cross of our redemption.

Not that we may ever become all that Jesus is. Surely his eternal relation to the Father must be unshared by us. He is "the Son," "the Only Begotten," "the Well Beloved," "the First and the Last." Therefore he never united himself with his disciples under a common name, and said *our Father*. "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God": that was his word. Nevertheless, in the teachings and in the cross of Him who "was made flesh and dwelt among us," "the Firstborn among many brethren," we learn that God is also truly our Father, and has loved us with that manner of love "that we should be called children of God; and such we are."

2. *The inward personal witness.* May I receive, together with the revelation of sonship in Jesus, an assurance that I personally am a child of God?

The priest might offer such an assurance. He might dare to say that I was born again in baptism, and that

the life of God thus imparted is nourished by the sacraments of penance and the mass. But I cannot believe him; and if I could, the peace that came to me, flowing from no inward fountain of truth, would be shallow and poor.

The evangelist might offer such an assurance: "Whosoever believes in the Son of God shall be saved. Do you believe? Do you accept the Saviour in simple faith? Then you are saved from sin and are become a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ. It is God's word. Trust not in your emotions. You may know you are saved, because God says it." With all my heart I believe him. But is this the whole gospel? *Whosoever believes; accept the Saviour; simple faith*—these are great words; do I really know their meaning? Have I believed unto righteousness? Have I indeed given myself up to Him in the faith of total self-surrender? If so, will there not be some answering Voice within? I am not trusting in my emotions.

> I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
> But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

But may I not look unto the Christ within as well as unto the Christ of Calvary? I want Him. If he dwell in me, will he keep eternal silence? The Scriptures cannot assure me personally and inwardly of acceptance with the Father. They show the conditions; the Spirit only, giving the power to come into the fellowship of the Son of God, can speak the word of reconciliation and peace. Moreover, the Scripture itself tells of the witness within. The Scripture is true, but also "the Spirit is truth" (1 John v. 6); and the Scripture says, "Hereby know we that we abide in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (1 John iv. 13).

To doubt the reality of such an experience with the Psalms, the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles open before us, would be impossible. Men and women have known themselves to be children of God, not directly because of what the Bible teaches, not directly because of the revelation given in the life of Jesus, but because of God himself speaking in their hearts, with a voice which they could hear and recognize; and it was *according to the Scriptures.*

Shall we study for a few moments one of the great passages (Romans viii. 15, 16) that bear upon our subject?—"For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God." Those who are trying to justify themselves by obedience to the Law are ever under condemnation; and it is a spirit of "bondage to fear," because their eyes have been opened to see, impending above them, the penalty of their constant failures and disobedience. But Paul reminds his Christian brethren that since their coming to Christ for salvation they have not received another spirit of "bondage to fear," but on the contrary a spirit of freedom, such as a son feels in his own father's house,—"the spirit"—or a spirit—"of adoption whereby we cry,"—not repeat a formula, not articulate a word, but speak forth the feeling of the heart—"Abba, Father." Now this hitherto unfelt sense of God's fatherhood, this childlike love and trust and longing, this new filial feeling, this heart-cry of *Father,* is a proof that we are born anew. And it is a proof that our own hearts offer, the witness of our own spirits, to this supreme experience of human life. But whence came this experience?

what evoked this heart-cry? who inspired this new sense of God as Father? Not we ourselves; not any word of Scripture. The Spirit of God inspired it. Hence it is the Spirit's testimony even more truly than it is our own: "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God."

Beside this passage let us put another, of like significance: "Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). It is not God's will that we should be left without some inward assurance of our filial relation to him; therefore he sends into our hearts the same revealing Spirit that abode in the heart of Jesus, to cry unto God *Father*. Does the Spirit call God Father? He empowers us to do it. Our hearts rise up toward the God of the spirits of all flesh in the nearness of a child's trust and love; but it is through the touch, nay, through the abiding presence, of his own Spirit. Our *Abba, Father* is the Spirit's voice within.

This inner consciousness of sonship to the heavenly Father may be awakened in its power at some designable time and place. Why not? It would be analogous to certain well-defined experiences in the natural relations of life. One may sometimes point to the very hour when his heart first went out in love to his friend. The father may tell of the very occasion—perhaps when the baby seemed to be dying—on which he first felt the real and incommunicable meaning of the sacred mystery of fatherhood. Jean Paul Richter records the exact circumstances in which the sense of his personality asserted itself: "Never shall I forget the phenomenon in myself, never till now recited, when I stood by the birth of my own self-consciousness, the place and time of

which are distinct in my memory. On a certain forenoon, I stood, a very young child, within the house door, and was looking out toward the wood-pile, as, in an instant, the inner revelation, *I am I,* like lightning from heaven, flashed and stood brightly before me; in that moment had I seen myself as *I,* for the first time and forever." If, then, a natural affection or an intuition of reason may flash into the consciousness quick and clear as the sunlight, why should it be thought strange when we hear of similar experiences in the spiritual life?

But there is no good ground for the inference that it will always or usually be so. I had been led, in early life, to believe that unless the witness of the Spirit was unmistakable as a cloudless morning and broke upon the soul quite as suddenly, its genuineness might be suspected. It was a faith that brought only insufferable darkness; for in my own experience neither of these two conditions was met. Let us learn to discriminate between the essential and the incidental, between reality and degrees, between life and its varied manifestations. Have you love for your friend? It matters nothing whether you can fix the precise date of its beginning. Have you been led to draw near unto God, and then to go forth and do his will toward men, as Father? You have no reason for doubt or sadness, if unable to say that in such an hour a sunbright filial consciousness illumined your soul.

The assurance of faith may exist in many degrees, from the lowest, hardly appreciable, to a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. Natural temperament may color this spiritual experience; so may the state of the bodily health, for shattered nerves and morbid secre-

tions will sometimes cast a shade of despondency upon even the saintly mind; so may the religious teaching that has been received, for if we have been taught, on the one hand, that nothing but the full illumining of love and joy is a sure evidence of salvation, or, on the other, that no internal evidence of it is to be expected, we are likely to depreciate, instead of thankfully cherishing, what we may have already received of the filial knowledge of God. But with increasing faith and fidelity—which may be promoted, under the rule of the Spirit, in many ways—will come increasing light and strength and gracious assurance. "The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that *obey* him."

3. *Its expression in life and conduct.* In divers forms, holy and beautiful, will this filial spirit declare itself in the life. As it grows and strengthens, so will its gracious effects appear more abundantly. And these too are a proof: the fruits of the Spirit confirm the witness of the Spirit.

It will become *confidence toward God in prayer.* It was the naïve question of a child, concerning a man whose public prayers were loud and boisterous: "If he lived nearer to God, couldn't God hear him without his talking so loud?" Such a childish misapprehension may remind us that the closer our walk with God, the more peaceful, and at the same time the more truly earnest and trustful, will be our petitions. Sometimes, indeed, there will be strong supplications, an agony of supplication, wrestling and travail of spirit; but in it all, the heart of peace.

Think of the calm and absolute trustfulness of Jesus in his communion with the Father. No shadow of doubt or misgiving lay upon his mind: "I knew that

thou hearest me always." Would we have some part in the faith of Jesus? We may share it according as in him we receive the inner revelation of the Father.

It will take the form of *freedom in service.* "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart." Consider what would be the response of a right-minded child to the love of a perfect father. If there could be a father who was all wisdom, and purity, and manliness, and genius, and self-sacrificing devotion, how freely would any true-hearted child serve and obey him. Not needing to be driven by the lash, or coaxed and persuaded by various promises of reward, he would die for his father and count the sacrifice nothing. Such a Father, only infinitely greater and better, have you and I. The best human love that has ever brightened our lives is but a "beam in darkness" from the eternal light of love that is in him. If we did but know him as we might, how gladly would we observe his law and do his work. One day of such knowledge and service—and we could truly say, *I have lived.* Jesus said, "If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Because he will give us of his own. He would make us partakers of *his* rest in God: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." He breathes into our hearts *his* peace: "My peace I give you." He offers us *his* joy: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you." He would have us share in *his* mission and authority: "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." So, also, if the Son make free, it will be through fellowship with *his own* life of Sonship; and that is freedom indeed. Not a living by rule and rote, by stereotyped rite and dogma,

by placing our consciences in the keeping of a confessor or a casuist, but a living straight out of the conscience and heart "according to the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." A like-minded son will keep the word (the mind, λόγος), no less than the commandment, of his father.

It will be *reverent.* "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." Reverence is nowise inconsistent with the freedom of love. It is love looking up. The man to whom God is a far-away Being—Deity, the Almighty, the First Cause—he is the man that consents to be profane in speech and act. Who would fling from his lips the name of his own father or mother in the language of passion, or jest, or cursing, or obscenity, as if it were an unclean and despicable thing? The child of God will honor his Father.

It will create *the deepest satisfaction.* Said a young man whom I was urging to commit himself wholly to the service of Christ: "Let me ask, Do you really enjoy prayer, and attending church, and such things?" He had made some attempt at a religious life, and had found it irksome. Behold, what a weariness is it! was the honest purport of his testimony. Suppose, then, the Christian's life should not be enjoyable: it is right and good. Shall we be willing to do only the easy and to bear only the light? What would be the result, in any case, of laying out one's life on a plan like that? All noble living is difficult. It demands the overcoming of obstacles, and the subduing of the flesh. But it *is* enjoyable, and more. Whatever mere pleasures it may reject—and it will retain enough—it holds the true secret of blessedness. There is joy in worthy endeavor and attainment. The higher the activity, the finer the quali-

ty of the resulting enjoyment. Self-indulgence, physical, intellectual, or moral, is easy, and for a time pleasurable; but it is not and cannot be healthful or life-giving. Above all, have we not learned that love itself is the divinest joy? Say to that devoted father or mother: "You are doing a great deal for your child, and making many sacrifices; of course it must go very hard, it makes your life miserable, no doubt; but, then, you expect to get it all back again in the way of support and attention in old age": your words, if they could be taken seriously, would hurt like a bitter blow in the face. Unmixed filial love is not so common or so powerful. But here and there it exists in its might, unconscious of self-denial, laughing at weariness and toil in behalf of its object; quivering with pain when the last kind answering look is given, and the dear, venerable form is laid to rest. Life is love. But these human affections, tried and wounded, sweet and satisfying, deeper than any words can go to describe them, are the good gifts of a love that is Divine? As we respond to that, walking in love even as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, the service we render will not be grievous, but glad. The child-heart is a crystal cup of joy.

It will enter into our preaching as *a living word of truth*. With what more thrilling message could we be intrusted than that of sonship to God? Can we speak such a message? It is written, "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 3). Even a phonograph might easily be made to repeat the words. But to say them with spiritual intelligence, to know the lordship of Jesus, to make the personal confession that Jesus is Lord, can be done only as God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath

shined in our hearts. So with all spiritual truth. The preacher may get valuable aid from the theologians, but any theology that he can use must be first wrought over in the furnace heat of his own soul; the Scriptures are inspired of God to show the way of salvation, but those only know who follow on to know the Lord; Christian biography unrolls its shining record of heroic and saintly characters, but it is our own characters that energize in the pulpit; the Christ of God lived the life of perfect sonship in humanity, but it is only those who receive him and thereby become sons of God themselves that are prepared to interpret his life to others.

Our preaching is to be, in the truest personal sense, confessional. It was for a conference of preachers that Charles Wesley wrote the hymn,

> What we have felt and seen
> With confidence we tell,
> And publish to the sons of men
> The signs infallible.

The preacher who knows God as Father and his fellowmen as brothers has a present truth to deliver. So much as this knowledge has been spiritually assimilated, he *is* the truth that he speaks, and therefore he can speak it indeed. Though he should not utter a single word of direct testimony, yet he must give of his own and of himself to the congregation. The man will unconsciously yet inevitably become a part of the message.

V

Spiritual Insight

We are not made aware of all kinds of truths or realities in the same way. It would be as impossible for me to know the magnolia tree in my neighbor's yard, except through the *senses,* as to know that it puts forth its leaves in time, and was brought into existence by a cause, except through the *reason,* or to know that its blossoms are beautiful, except through the *sensibility.* Now we are capable of knowing spiritual realities: there may be a revelation of God—of his righteousness, his fatherhood, his approval or displeasure—to the human mind. In our study of the inner life hitherto, this capability of spiritual discernment has been all the while either asserted or implied. Let us now give it a more distinct consideration.

You will find very little about this spiritual sense in an ordinary book of psychology. Because it chiefly appears in the character rather than in the nature, in what some men personally become rather than in what all men naturally are. But neither will you be sure to meet with it in any pronounced form on the pages of the poet or the novelist; for though it is character as well as nature that these writers portray, yet we may turn all their pages, in some instances—even in that of Shakespeare, for example—without making acquaintance with one saintly or thoroughly Christian man. Honorable men, kind-hearted men, wicked men, hypocrites, are prominent and numerous; but the spiritual mind is almost as completely absent as if there were no such type. On

the other hand, if we should take up a Christian poem or story or biography, a devotional treatise, a hymnal, and strike out everything that concerns the personal knowledge of God, it would be to destroy the very heart of the book.

Spiritual perception is not to be thought of as a separate and distinct faculty—such as sense-perception, memory, conscience—added to the natural faculties of the soul. It is a certain mode of action, or use, of the natural faculties. It is the very highest use of them, and is possible only under the renewing and illumining power of the Holy Spirit. It is the man in his innermost intuitions and energies—the moral nature, the person, the human spirit—responsive to the gracious, brooding presence of the living God.

In the upper chamber, Jesus said to his disciples: "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs [or dark sayings, παροιμίαις] : the hour cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but shall tell you plainly of the Father" (John xvi. 25). What was this clearer revelation just at hand that Jesus promised—this telling the disciples plainly of the Father? Was it an explanation of the Father's love and will in literal language, instead of parables or other figures of speech? No; for all language on such a subject is but a parable. The truer teaching is within, not through words, but through the Divine Presence itself. It was this that Jesus said should soon be given, even the teaching of the Spirit of truth. "All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you" (John xvi. 15).

Will spiritual insight beget arrogance? will he that has it put on supercilious airs with those who differ

from him in theology or biblical exegesis? Impossible, except as he is untrue to whatever gifts of the Spirit he may have received. Did Saul of Tarsus become arrogant when to the blind Pharisee the heavens were opened, and the glory of God shone upon him in the face of Jesus Christ? The most advanced pupil of the Spirit will not think of himself as "advanced," but simply as a beginner that only in the dawning light of heaven will put away childish things and know as he is known. Besides, he will be quick to recognize the presence of the Spirit in others, and will know how impossible it is to draw a hard-and-fast line and say, "On this side are the blind, and on that the sons of light." Nor will he be disposed to compare himself with others and to measure himself by others, but disposed only to get more fully and to give more freely the treasure of truth that has been opened to him.

But neither will he doubt or dishonor the power that worketh in him because certain other men—no matter how intellectually or morally respectable—may make light of it. The fact that most persons show but little apprehension of spiritual realities does not prove that none have it, especially when we bear in mind that men generally are not careful to comply with the conditions on which such knowledge is given. Let us not contract our vision, and fall into narrow-mindedness, in the very effort to take broad views. We can never hope to know some things with which even such a creature as the honey bee, without the slightest instruction or experience, seems to be familiar. The prescience of many an insignificant insect is as far beyond our capacity of foresight as any conceivable gift of prophecy. They "are little upon the earth," but "exceeding wise." Shall

we, then, endeavor to explain away the operation of this inexplicable instinct in them, because we are conscious of nothing like it in ourselves?

But there are closer analogies. The most exact science is no better than hazy sentimentalism to the uninitiated; and they do not really believe it. A demonstration in mathematics is nothing but a sound in the ears to the man whose faculty of abstract reasoning lies asleep. Let him awake mathematically, and he will know that upon these ideal relations of number and space, which once seemed so meaningless, everything that he touches and sees in the universe has been constructed. So with the spirit of beauty in the natural world. Some minds hardly respond to it at all. They see nothing in a spade but a spade, and are content to call it by that name and no other. To their neighbor probably even a spade is something more—a product of the forest and the mine, a creation of man working together with God, a symbol of rural life and labor, gathering about itself by many a subtle link of association the thought of man's mastery of nature and the lovely mystery of culture and fruitfulness. When it was said to Turner, the landscape painter, "I never see in nature the glows and colors you put into your pictures"—"Ah! don't you wish you could?" was the consecrated artist's reply.

So with sense-knowledge. In order to gain that, we must have the requisite organs in their normal state of health and activity. A dim eye sees the earth and sky but dimly; a careless eye, superficially; a color-blind eye, without proper distinction of colors; a blind eye, not at all. An ear that is dull of hearing can never know the power of a whisper, never feel the finest eloquence, never be stirred by the soft and delicate blending of sounds in

music; a tone-deaf ear is lost among tunes; a deaf ear dooms its possessor to the isolation of a silent world.

Now let us open the New Testament Scriptures—suppose it to be at the Epistles—and we shall find ourselves in still another sphere. We hear the apostles speak of things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart imagined, but which are revealed by the Spirit,—of the glory of God appearing as nowhere else on earth in the Lord Jesus Christ; of the awful sense of sin through the law; of a translation from darkness into marvelous light; of a peace that passeth understanding; of love to the unseen Saviour; of glorying in tribulation; of knowing Him that is true and abiding in Him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. Shall we turn impatiently away from all this as something superficial and unreal, or at least peculiar to apostolic experience? Let us rather turn *to* it, as we turn to the material world, to beauty, to mathematical truth, to the conceptions of science. Let us think on these things, and care for them. Let us put ourselves into the right knowing attitude toward them. Let us become what—according to the monitions of that which is deepest and best in our nature—we were made and intended to be. Let us yield to be led into harmony with God, willing to do his will. Thus shall we know the life of the Spirit. How otherwise could it be possible?

What, then, is spiritual insight?

First, I would say, it is the insight of *conscience.* It was to this moral sense that Jesus appealed, when he said to the people—not to rabbis or educated men, but to all—"Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" (Luke xii. 57.) "Whether you have good teachers or not, whether you are able to read the Scriptures or

not, whether you understand my claims or not, use your own power of moral discrimination." Paul expressed the hope that he and his brother ambassadors for Christ, who were "made manifest unto God," were also "made manifest in the conscience" of the Corinthian congregation (2 Cor. v. 11). Even those who are without the law, he says, may show "the work of the law within their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith" (Rom. ii. 14, 15). As for himself, he says, "My conscience bearing witness with me *in the Holy Ghost*" (Rom. ix. 1).

Now if conscience be acknowledged at all, it must be acknowledged as the imperial power of the soul. Strip away its authority, and you reduce it to silence. It cannot speak except to command. How so? Does conscience usurp this place of supremacy? or has it been capriciously enthroned? is there just as much inherent authority in appetite, or desire for property, or natural affection, as in moral obligation? One might as well ask whether the heavens are higher than the earth. We know that conscience is not only a vision but a voice, and that all its words are imperatives.

Whose imperatives? who speaks in them? whom do they make known?

> O joy supreme! I know the Voice
> Like none beside on earth or sea;
> Yea, more, O soul of mine, rejoice—
> By all that he requires of me,
> I know what God himself must be.

The judgments of conscience are intuitive. Not indeed as to acts, but as to motives. I may have to do some reasoning to decide whether I ought to give the dollar in my pocketbook to a certain charitable object,

but if I begin to reason as to whether I ought to be kind and helpful, I am refusing to walk by a light that does not have to be sought without but has already been kindled within. I *know* that I ought. Apart from any consideration of circumstances or consequences, men are able in themselves to judge concerning the rightness of principles of action.

Some persons, it is true, show very early in life a better outfit of moral perception than do others. But more noteworthy than any constitutional difference is the difference in education and growth. Be true to your knowledge of the right. Act out your convictions, at all hazards; refuse to parley with the father of lies, or to practice self-deception; choose always that which is highest as your highest; and verily you have your reward. More and more righteous is your character becoming, surer and clearer your vision of the God of righteousness.

But I know of nothing more fearful than the reverse side of this truth of our nature. Conscience is easily liable to enfeeblement and injury. Give it but little to do; fail to bring your daily life before its tribunal; trifle with its decisions; persuade yourself that the lie you told was not a lie, that the injurious indulgence of self is not injurious, that your personal ambition is a desire to honor the Lord, that your harsh temper and cutting words are but an expression of righteous indignation: and at a more rapid rate than you have ever suspected your moral perceptions will be dulled and corrupted. You will cease to see the right, to feel quick and keen compunction for wrongdoing, to set a supreme value upon the Divine approval, to *know God*. There is a physical disease called progressive paralysis. It is attended with very grave danger, though not with acute

suffering. But far more terrible—and alas! far more common—is the progressive paralysis of the moral sense.

Again, it is the insight of *conscious need.* That which we want we already know something about. Every question implies some knowledge of its answer—the knowledge at least of the direction in which the answer lies; else how could we ask the question? So, every need of our nature is the sign of a correlated good. As we feel after that good, it is not without some inward prevision of what it must be. For we do feel after it, even as the buried root in the parched earth feels forth toward the life-giving stream; and we find it, because God will not put us to shame. The good that is set over against the need, the object of the instinctive longing, is attainable; and as it comes more and more fully into possession, we know it indeed.

Are we hungry? He who wakened the sense of hunger is the God of the fruitful earth, and has provided abundance of bread. Have we the desire to know intellectually? From ten thousand directions knowledge is aflow toward the open and eager mind. Are we so made as to crave society, friends, the rest and sweetness of home? These too may be found; the need is prophetic of the supply. Nor is this all; for man cannot live by bread, or knowledge, or friends, alone.

> I spread forth my hands unto *Thee:*
> My soul thirsteth after *Thee,* as a weary land.

"If haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he is not far from each one of us." As the harvest fields of the earth, not always productive but universal, testify to men's hunger; as traditions, books, schools, laboratories, optical instruments, and newspa-

pers, testify to men's desire for knowledge; as communities and homes testify to men's innate longing for society—so do the religious faiths and practices of the world, often false and superstitious but universal, testify to men's need of the knowledge of God. It is the supreme need; and, as in every other case, the corresponding good is offered. "He that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also."

The sense of spiritual need is not given simply to start us forth in the Christian life. When Jesus says that the man that comes to him shall not hunger, he does not mean that the hunger of the spirit shall cease, but that it shall be perpetually satisfied. As a matter of personal experience we know that it becomes weaker or stronger according to the treatment it receives at our hands. Indeed, is not this true also of all the higher wants? Who is it that is content, at fifty years of age, with such mental food as the more newsy paragraphs of his daily paper may supply? The man who from his youth up has given small heed to the early craving of his mind for knowledge and thought. Who is it, on the other hand, that lives under the pleasing impulse of an ever-deepening passion to know—who would be ready to say, with Lord Macaulay, that if he "had his choice of life, he would bury himself in one of those immense libraries at the universities, and never pass a waking hour without a book before him," and would deem it a fitting end of his earthly career to die as Macaulay died, in his library, with the book he had been reading still open on his table? It is the man who has read, and observed, and studied, and thought from year to year, and thus

gratified his inborn desire for knowledge. Nor is it otherwise, we may be sure, with spiritual want. Give it little encouragement; open not your heart to God; let the craving for other objects, for ease, popularity, friendship, position and power, absorb the energies of the mind; and your conscious need of spiritual good will gradually, perhaps very rapidly, fade and fail. But if we refuse to starve the soul, if we feed upon the word of God, if we live in the communion of the Holy Spirit, the sense of spiritual need, with its accompanying sense of spiritual reality, will deepen and increase.

Still again, it is the insight of *love*. It was Paul's prayer for the Philippians: "That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment" (Phil. i. 9). Why should love *in knowledge* be prayed for? that the knowledge may be rightly used? Yes; but also that it may be enlarged and perfected. For there is a certain knowledge and discernment—as we have already had occasion to note—that cannot be gained except through love. What is it? The knowledge of love itself.

Whether it be in a man, our fellow, or in God, our Creator, love cannot make itself known to the unloving. How natural it is for a cold-hearted or self-seeking man to ascribe to all acts a selfish motive, and shake his head skeptically at the suggestion of any other. I have heard of a father who said to a friend of his earlier life that there is little or no truth in what is commonly described as parental love—that parents care for their children as a duty, not as a pleasure. He found it hard to believe in a distinct and powerful type of affection of which, strangely enough, he seems to have had no personal experience. Suppose a man, then, to be thor-

oughly selfish. No natural affection has ever risen in his heart. No thrill either of neighborliness or of reverence has ever given him even a momentary sympathetic outlook upon the need or the worthiness of others. His one, sole, unvarying motive is self-interest. Could such a man be made to recognize the spirit of disinterestedness? Could a Judas understand a Mary of Bethany? (John xii. 1-8.) Impossible; and if all men were so, such a word as "love" or "disinterestedness" would never have found its way into any language. "That ye being *rooted and grounded in love,* may be *strong to apprehend* with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and *to know the love of Christ* which passeth knowledge." Love will make us "strong to apprehend"—and nothing else can —even the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ (Eph. iii. 17-19). The devils believe and tremble; but Satan could not believe in an unselfish service—"Doth Job serve God for naught?"

Nor is this an anomalous fact. We have not found an exception, but only an example. All knowledge is conditioned on experience. Take, for instance, its lowest form—a sensation. Suppose you had never known the color green, and were asked what would be the effect of a mixture of blue and yellow, how long would it take you to call up in imagination the unknown color, the hitherto unfelt sensation, green? It would be altogether out of your power; the most imaginative genius that has ever lived could not form a mental picture of even so slight a thing as a new color. Not the remotest conception can we gain of a feeling, or quality, or object totally dissimilar to all that we have ever had experience of. If therefore the object be a person, it can be

recognized by us only through our own experience of personal qualities.

It is thus that we become acquainted with our fellowmen. They reveal themselves by various signs which we interpret as representing a nature or experience of which we are conscious in ourselves. Some of them we know better than others because we are more like them; the affinity is closer. Southey wrote a better "Life of Nelson" than of Wesley; Macaulay, who cared for man but not for nature, was unable to appreciate Wordsworth. We have to grow up to the great and good in order to gain an adequate apprehension of their character. Still, were they totally unlike ourselves, the attempt to understand them in any true sense would be as hopeless as the attempt of an earthworm to understand a human being.

How, then, can we know God at all, save through what likeness to him we may find in ourselves? If personality in him, for example, be not only infinite while in us it is finite, but altogether different in its nature, then we can know nothing whatever about it. So with wisdom, righteousness, mercy—all qualities as truly as love. If words are essentially different in meaning as applied to Deity and as applied to ourselves, then, in their application to him, they are meaningless, and we are left in blank ignorance of our Maker. But if we are in very truth his children, and not only as having been made in his image but also as having been renewed into his image, his own Spirit in our hearts crying, "Abba, Father," then indeed shall we be able to see God in his self-revelation as our God and Father.

Riding to a country church, in company with a friend, one Sunday morning, I was told the story of his first

knowledge of God. "There," said he, pointing to a near-by field, "is the place of my conversion. I was clearing the timber off that piece of land. I had lifted my ax to cut down a bush, but noticing in it a nest of young birds, I felt pity for them and spared the bush for their sakes. Then all at once came the thought, Thus has it been with me—the hand of God has been lifted to cut me down, but in pity he has spared my life. And that brought me to repentance." Through a thrill of compassion for the poor nestlings, the wood-cutter received the knowledge of that God who had ever been to him very pitiful and of tender mercy.

This, then, to state the conclusion of the whole matter, is the truth of spiritual insight in its largest expression:

It is the insight of *sonship to God.* A son may know his father. Let us hear the teaching of Jesus: "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son." In the supreme sense, the Only-begotten Son only can know the infinite God. But those to whom he reveals the Father, themselves becoming spiritual sons of God, will share, according to their limited capacity, this filial knowledge of God. So, he adds the precious truth, "and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27).

I have but one more word to say. Evidently filial knowledge is a growth. In the infant it is merely potential. The child begins to love and understand; but how meager his appreciation, as he takes the father's hand, prattling at his side, of what the answering pressure of that strong and gentle hand betokens. In manhood and womanhood, if our lives have been pure, we love and "honor our father and our mother" more truly

than ever before. At fifty we know them better than at fifteen. Surely the same thing is true of the filial knowledge of God. It may be actual, or it may be potential only. It may grow from more to more. Or it may decline and fail. Having begun in the Spirit, we may seek to be made perfect in the flesh. By insensible degrees, we may lapse from the spirit of sonship into that of servitude or that of estrangement. Then by corresponding degrees will the light that is in us darken. But it must not be so; for how then can we be light-bearers to the world? Let us be imitators of God as dear children; and as we come into closer sympathy with the purposes and ways of our Father, as we learn to obey him more promptly, as we do more for his Name in sacrificial love, as we receive more of the mind that was in his Son, our knowledge of that great spiritual reality in which all others are included, the Divine Fatherhood, will become ever deeper and more assured. "I have written unto you, little children, because ye know the Father. . . . And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things. . . . And now, my little children, abide in him" (1 John ii.).

PART THIRD

IN THOUGHT AND CONDUCT

"You oughtn't to attempt to speak in public, Moody. You make many mistakes in grammar."

"I know I make mistakes," said Moody, "and I lack a great many things; but I'm doing the best I can with what I've got. But, look here, my friend, *you've* got grammar enough; what are you doing with it for Jesus?"

"Nothing artificial, forced, exaggerated, is in place here—no borrowing of foreign tinsel to cover one's own nakedness; no trying to appear different from what one is; no effort to give more than one really has or has received from the Lord."—CHRISTLIEB, *Homiletic.*

"We talk—talk—or read what comes next to hand. We must, absolutely must, cure this evil, or betray the cause of God. But how? 1. Read the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly. 2. Steadily spend all the morning in this employment, or at least five hours in the four and twenty. 'But I have no taste for reading.' Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your former employment."—*Old Methodist Discipline.*

"And this is what we have in the Christian revelation: it is a record of the redeeming activity of God culminating in the history of the Redeemer. What we term the Scriptures have no meaning and no function unless as so considered."—FAIRBAIRN, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology.*

"And so one summer morning at dawn, as she [Louisa M. Alcott] watched the sun rising over the winding river in a glory of rose and gold, a great peace came to the young heart. A calm sense of God's presence, 'as tender and sustaining as a father's arm,' came to her, never to leave her for the rest of her life."

"Oh, let me love my Lord more fathoms deep
Than there is line to sound with; let me love
My fellow not as men that mandates keep."
—SIDNEY LANIER, *Remonstrance.*

"Spirit of Christ, Spirit of the Crucified One, let all my gifts be permeated by thee. . . . Let my manner be thine; plunge it in the wave of thy self-forgetfulness, that it may come forth sparkling with that grace which flows from unconsciousness alone."—MATHESON.

"His very face with change of heart is changed."—*Idyls of the King.*

"The constant miracle by which we are nourished is personality."

I

Common Sense

In two Christian workers, equal as to all other good qualities, extraordinary common sense—the *know how* of everyday life—may mark the difference between a moderate and an extraordinary degree of usefulness. It may organize the activity of a man of no high intellectual rank into that of a Dwight L. Moody.

The verdicts of common sense readily win universal acceptance. They are condensed and set aglow in the proverbs of all peoples. But is not the thing itself, like genius, innate and unacquirable? It is certainly not like genius as to rarity. For, as the name itself testifies, it is supposed to be *common* sense. It is in fact acquired rather than innate, and the capacity to acquire it has been given to all sane minds. Because such sense is needed, almost as the memory or the senses are needed, in every man's life. The reason why so much more of it appears in some persons' actions than in others' is not to be found so often in a difference of native endowment as in a difference of use and improvement. What seems to be intuition may be educated quickness of thought. For example, the practiced reader picks a sentence off the page—in his own or some other language—at a glance; the competent accountant darts his eye up a column of figures, and writes the correct sum below; the business manager, on entering his office, sees in a moment the significant points in the day's outlook. But these are not simple, single acts; they are intellectual processes made up of many separate acts brought into

combination so swiftly as hardly to rise into consciousness. Those who practice them successfully have learned to do so, perhaps at the cost of many a mistake and failure. Similarly the apparent intuitions of common sense are quick, half-conscious inferences concerning things that have become familiar through observation.

Now there is no man more in need of common sense than the man who is charged with the communication of a spiritual knowledge that is far beyond its range, the minister of God's word. Whether he shall have it or not in due measure depends on the use that he makes of what is given him to begin with. If he be content merely to brood over his books during the week and come out on Sunday with a literary or theological address, he will be truly spoken of as "unpractical." But if it be his aim to make the most of the ministry upon which he has entered—to fulfill it—he will learn, whatever his natural capacities or the lack of them, to take in the situations of life as they are offered, and put forth his energies in the most effective manner. It may be learned as truly as homiletics or the Greek Testament.

Not for a moment need we suspect any conflict between common sense and *spirituality of character.* There can be none; for both are included in the unity of a complete nature. As well imagine conflict between the fruit—the splendid *fruition*—of a tree and the bark that helps the vitalizing sap to flow. A man of deep thought may be deficient in memory, but there is no good reason why he should be; for the two faculties, so far from being contrary, are mutually helpful—as appears in many of the greatest thinkers and scholars of our race. A preacher may have more facility in analyzing a theme or patiently seeking out the truth than in

the oral expression of his ideas: another may have so fine a faculty of language that every idea and feeling seems to find without effort its fitting word; and he can talk as fast as he can think—or even faster. But when we credit a slow and heavy speaker with superior thought-power, because of his poor speaking ability, or charge a fluent and eloquent speaker with superficiality, because of his fluency and charm, we are grievously stumbling. The gift of thought and the gift of memory, or of language, when both are allowed fair play, will help and be helped by each other. So, likewise, with spirituality of character and plain, practical good judgment: they are allies, not enemies.

Common sense is not a substitute for *right motives.* Holding the most sensible views, with our eyes open to all the facts of a case, we may act with utter folly. Indeed, what is often spoken of as a lack of common sense is a lack of its use rather than of its possession; the real difficulty lying farther back at the springs of action. Some lower motive has usurped the place of the highest. The glutton knows that he is robbing himself of true comfort, and goes on living to eat; for "folly is joy to him that is void of wisdom." Show the intemperate man, either from the pulpit or at the fireside, that his habits are ruinous. Alas! he needs something more powerful than argument. Well enough is he aware that life is falling in ruins about him, with nothing but darkness and suffering ahead; but the motives to a clean and self-controlled life touch but feebly upon his will, as compared with the terrible drunkard's thirst.

In my early ministry I heard of a discourse by an eloquent preacher from a passage in the Song of Solomon (chapter iv. 16), of which the divisions were as follows:

1. The north wind is conviction of sin. 2. The south wind is conversion. 3. The garden is the human heart. 4. The spices are the fruits of the Spirit. Meeting with the preacher not long afterwards, I began eagerly to ask about the sermon, the report of which had interested me greatly: "Yes," he replied, "if one could only believe it means that." It was his only remark, and to me a chilling disappointment. The preacher's reverence for the truth was not strong enough to prevent the doing of violence to common sense for the sake of a pleasing treatment of his text.

Though utterly unable to do the work of *scholarship,* common sense is in aid thereof. I remember to have heard an uneducated man of fine mother-wit say: "I know the way in which one word at least was formed, the word *history.* It is composed of *his-story.*" A shrewd guess, which a very little philology would nevertheless have discredited. Common sense cannot tell us the age of the earth, or the dates of the Assyrian clay tablets, or the most ancient form of the New Testament manuscripts, or the translation of a Hebrew book, or the Jewish ideas of religion in the time of Christ. These are questions that can be judged by scholarship only, and it is idle to drag them before any other tribunal. Still a mere gatherer of facts, linguistic, scientific, or any other, is a poor sort of scholar. Facts must be collated and conclusions drawn; and here indeed good judgment is imperatively demanded. Is it always present? The master may have less of it than the disciple.

Nor is common sense inimical to *sentiment.* Here is a free citizen of his native land to whom its history and institutions are unspeakably dear; whose heart is thrilled with patriotic devotion at the sight of its flag; who would

gladly go forth and risk his life in defense of its liberties and honor. His neighbor is of a different mind. He cares nothing for national history, or traditions, or institutions; he is not interested in people whom he has never seen, or who are yet to be born; the flag is to him only a party-colored piece of silk or muslin fastened to the end of a pole. So he shall be permitted to plow his own hundred acres of good land and eat the fruits thereof in peace, he is quite willing to leave the nation's cause to other hands. "What is that to me?" he urges. "Let the lovers of sentiment feed upon sentiment; I am a man of common sense." Should we say that he is more sensible than his patriotic neighbor, or simply more benighted and selfish? It is the part of common sense not to taboo sentiment—without which we should no longer be men—but to regulate its expression, and to place the best means at its disposal for the ennobling and enriching of life.

Common sense, while it cannot do the work of the *imagination,* is called upon to test the results of that work. It makes no guesses or theories. The power to theorize is of the imagination, and it is an indispensable instrument of research and discovery. But theories cannot be verified by the imagination. They must be submitted to the test of observation and experience, and are thus brought within the sphere of common sense. When the world was two thousand years younger than it is now, philosophers said that the planets, because they are the most perfect of bodies, must move with the most perfect motion, which is the circular. But observation found them moving in elliptic orbits. "When thou art going to dispute with unbelievers," said Cyril of Jerusalem in his instructions to young Christians, "concerning the

cross of Christ, first make with thy hand the sign of Christ's cross, and the gainsayer will be silenced." Common sense in religion would have noted the instances in which the contrary result followed, and so have dissolved the pious fancy. Question if you will, speculate and theorize, lay down premises and draw deductions; but let experience answer intellect with the words of Philip to Nathanael, "Come and see." It is the modern, or scientific, or common-sense method.

What should we be without ideals? Sense would run riot, or the love of ease would stagnate the soul. "Because there is no vision, the people cast away restraint." Yet when some lofty ideal has proved impracticable, it becomes us to accept gratefully the disenchantment of common sense, and follow a truer "vision." That was an imposing conception that dominated the minds of churchmen in the Middle Ages,—of one Holy Roman Catholic Church, ruling and teaching all men for their eternal salvation; laying its hand upon every day and making the year a Christian year; regenerating in the waters of baptism every babe that is born; entering through confession and absolution the sanctuary of every human life; transmuting the bread and wine of the Eucharist into the very Bread that came down from heaven to give life unto the world; bidding the absolved soul upon every deathbed depart in peace; one august ceremonial of worship, in one and the same language, East and West, in city and village, among the barbarous and the civilized, everywhere; no sects, no heresies, no agonizing and ineffectual search for truth; one Christian hierarchy through which flows the treasure of sacramental grace; one infallible interpretation of Scripture and teaching of the will of God in men's lives; the nations of

the earth acknowledging the rightful supremacy of the Church, every king accepting his crown at its hand and ruling according to its will; the whole world a theocracy with the great world-priest, the vicar of Christ, upon the throne. To the actualization of this ideal thousands upon thousands devoted their lives, denying themselves what is sweetest and dearest to the human heart, and, alas! perpetrating the cruelest crimes in the name of God.

What condemns this magnificent mediæval dream? Things as they are, facts, the mind of man as God made it. There can be no infallible world-priest or Church-council. There is no elaborate creed, or ritual service, or system of moral dietetics, that will commend itself to the approval of all minds. Men cannot be saved by force. To compel conformity to an established order by interdict and ban, is to secure—as Richard Baxter said—"but a seeming agreement, from the teeth outward." Its proper fruits are hypocrisy and unbelief.

At the opposite pole of ecclesiastical thought was the idea that rose in the minds of George Fox and the Friends of the seventeenth century. They said, the kingdom of heaven is within; religion is an individual matter between God and the soul; the inner light of the Spirit is given to every man, and is "the primary and infallible rule of faith and manners"; even the Scriptures, while they perfectly agree with this light within, being inspired by the same Spirit, are but a secondary rule; holy days and prescribed ordinances were preparatory to the present dispensation, and are now done away; baptism and the Lord's Supper were not intended for our observance, only the baptism of the Spirit and spiritual communion with the Lord are to be acknowledged;

worship is of the heart, and therefore no prescribed words of prayer and no hymn of praise are to be heard in the congregation; preaching is a Divine gift, and therefore no sermon is ever to be prepared or preannounced, but only as a distinct impulse of the Spirit is felt must a man or a woman speak in the congregation; the Church of Christ is a society of friends living and walking in the Spirit, loving God and their neighbors, separated from the world, suffering death, if need be, for their faith, and following after things that make for peace and things whereby they may edify one another, without an order of worship, or sacraments, or sacred music, or any system of ministerial supply.

What is the defect in a theory that contains so much of deep religious truth? It is not adapted to the constitution of man's nature as God made him. Spirits we are, but served by the senses, and hence in need of outward signs of the inward and spiritual grace; in need of order and ordinances, not as idols or masters, but as means of the spiritual life. It is true that man was not made for the Sabbath, but it is equally true that the Sabbath was made for man. So the Friends' ideal, taken as a whole, has fared ill at the hands of Christian common sense.

May we devise a practical scheme for the federation of the evangelical Churches of our land? Whether possible or not, it is greatly to be desired. The Churches are wasting in selfish competition strength that should be put forth, as in the different and independent states of a federal republic, in the common cause to which all alike have sworn allegiance. It is altar beside altar, even when it is not altar against altar. Six or eight separate denominational churches in a village of a thou-

sand inhabitants necessitates a life-and-death struggle for existence. It depresses inspiration, narrows the heart, and straitens the resources available for the evangelizing of the world. Shall such worse than wasteful competition continue in the older sections of our country, and steadily advance into the new settlements? A better understanding and a more Christian spirit are said to prevail in the foreign missionary work. "Practical fraternity is an accomplished fact in the mission field": such is the cheering intelligence I received a few days ago in a letter from a Methodist missionary in Korea. Why should there not be interdenominational fraternity and coöperation here as well as there?

It may be that the needed readjustment will be effected little by little, without any one broad catholic purpose on the part of the agents—a plan of God shown first in its fulfillment. Such things have been. Did Hannah Ball and Robert Raikes and Francis Asbury foresee the vast international Sunday-school system that was to follow their initiatory labors? They only saw something that could be done on Sundays for the children about them—and did it. For the rest, they were working in the dark at a plan of their Master's. When George Williams persuaded a few of his fellow-clerks in a London dry goods warehouse to unite with him in a prayer meeting for the conversion of the others, little did he dream that he was founding the world-wide Young Men's Christian Association of our day. But God knew it; and must we not believe, intended that it should be so? It was no more in John Wesley's mind to found a Church than to found an empire. But he was fully determined to spread scriptural holiness by all practicable means. Accordingly when a few persons came to

him for spiritual counsel, he appointed a day on which to meet them once a week, and thus arose the Methodist Societies; when the church edifices were closed against him, he laid aside his repugnance to preaching outside of consecrated walls, following the example of his friend Whitefield, and thus arose field preaching; when he saw that laymen could so speak the word of God as to save souls, he would not let the love of Church order shut his eyes to the fact, and thus arose his institute of lay preaching; when the members of a Society met together to pay their weekly dues for its support, the opportunity to inquire into their religious life was embraced, and thus arose the class meeting. The Conference, the itinerancy, ordination, the episcopacy, all had their origin in similar demands of the time. The result—foreseen only on high—was the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century and the Methodist churches of the world.

So, therefore, without any great directive ideal, the Christian worker, willing and practical, doing the thing that seems to be needed and at the time when it is needed, will some day find a larger significance in his work than had ever entered his own thoughts. May not Christian unity and Church federation be thus even now in the way of realization?

What, then, is common sense? In Christian character, it is wisdom. For wisdom is the concurrence of good judgment and the good will. It chooses, with keen observation and clear intelligence, the fitting means for the attainment of the highest ends—differing thus from craft, which seeks bad ends, and from skill, which does not concern itself about ends, good or bad, but about means only. Hence when the highest end is kept in

view, judgment, skill, common sense, wins the better name of wisdom. It is the way of life into which the Book of Proverbs would lead the willful feet of men:

> There is grievous correction for him that forsaketh the way,
> And he that hateth reproof shall die. . . .
> To the wise the way of life goeth upward,
> That he may depart from Sheol beneath. (Chap. xv. 10, 24.)

It is the good gift which James, "the brother of the Lord," and the Wise Man of the New Testament, bids us ask of God in the sure faith that it will be given abundantly and without upbraiding (chap. i. 5). It is the practical side of religion. Craft is a worship of Satan; skill does not quit the human plane; wisdom is the service of God.

In no part of the preacher's work is this home-bred yet heaven-born wisdom more needful than in the preaching itself.

Here the general fact is to be noted, that all rhetoric is systemized common sense. None of it was dreamed out of cloudland; it has all been gained by induction. Men who were concerned about the matter noticed the kind of speech that caught people's attention and moved them to action, on this and that occasion. They gathered as many instances as possible, and from them all taken together formed their opinion as to how men may be moved through speech. Thus was learned "the art of adapting discourse, in harmony with the subject and occasion, to the requirements of a reader or hearer." Like any natural science, it was all found in the observed facts. There are no "laws of rhetoric," except as rhetoric is the recognition of certain laws of the human mind. Many speakers know them and act according to them successfully, who have never looked into a

book on the subject. When they do study a rhetorical treatise, it furnishes them with no really new body of knowledge—as, for example, a text-book in history or astronomy would do—but simply presents in fuller and more systematic form the results of their own previous observation. Therefore, when we come to apply common sense to preaching, we find ourselves on neither unfamiliar nor unscientific ground.

Let me mention two of its precepts:

1. *Proportion.* A likeness represents the features of an object as they are; a caricature exaggerates some feature out of all proper relation to the rest, so as to cause misconception or disgust. Would we have the Christian faith to produce its true effect upon the minds of men? It must appear from the pulpit as a likeness, not as a caricature. No one doctrine or duty must be so set forth as to give it a prominence out of proportion to the related truths—as if a musician should harp continually on one string, and try by overstraining that one to atone for the silence of the others. No matter what the favorite theme may be—conversion, the witness of the Spirit, love to our neighbor, Christian perfection, temperance, covetousness—let it cast other great and useful themes into the shade, and our pulpit pictures, taken collectively, will be caricatures of Christian truth.

Not indeed that all themes should receive equal attention. Doctrines are not all alike fundamental, duties are not all of equal range and comprehension, wrongdoing is not all to be met with equal severity of rebuke. But let each receive its own relative emphasis, according to the needs of the people. It is said that even Chrysostom, peerless preacher though he was, gave some occasion for the ill feeling that led to his unjust banish-

ment, by an indiscriminate denunciation of foolish and sinful conduct: "He lashed with almost equal severity the most unpardonable crimes and the more venial foibles and follies." A more common mistake perhaps is to exalt an institution higher than a principle: not of set purpose, it may be, but practically to put the sacrament above the Spirit's power, the Sabbath above judgment and mercy and the love of God, ecclesiasticism above Christianity, the Church above the Saviour. It is as if we should find our commission as evangelists and teachers by reading that of our greatest apostolic prototype in the reverse order: "Christ sent me not to preach the gospel, but to baptize."

2. *Sympathy.* Said the same great Jewish preacher to the Gentiles: "Though I was free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more" (1 Cor. ix. 19). Conscious of his rights, manly and self-respecting, refusing to leave the Philippian jail except as became an unjustly condemned Roman citizen, Paul longed to put himself under bonds to all sorts and conditions of men, serving them close at hand in the gospel of Christ. Hence his avoidance of needless collision with their prejudices, and his accommodation of himself to their circumstances and customs. He stood not afar off, in self-satisfied isolation, but drew near to meet others' wishes, as a household servant, that he might by all means win some.

Take, as a single instance, the Apostle's first preaching at Antioch in Pisidia. He spoke by invitation in the synagogue. It was a great opportunity: how did the speaker improve it? We might imagine him saying to himself: "I will not approach them as Jews, but simply as sinners. I will preach to them exactly as to

a congregation of Gentiles. I have but one message for all men—Jesus Christ the crucified and risen Saviour. That is the gospel given to me by revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the mere proclamation of which will be used by the Holy Spirit for the salvation of sinful souls." But, no; that was not this preacher's way. Tell the message he would, heartily and boldly, always and everywhere; but first he must gain the attention and good will of the audience. So he begins this sermon to his fellow-Jews in Antioch by asking them as "men of Israel" and God-fearing men to listen; he identifies himself with them—"The God of this people Israel chose *our* fathers"; he tells the story of their national life; he refers to God's promise to raise up a son of David as a Saviour *to Israel,* and declares its fulfillment in Jesus; he quotes the testimony of John, whom all the people held as a prophet; he draws still nearer to his congregation in spirit and speech: "*Brethren,* children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you that fear God, to *us* [to us all, for I am no heretic or renegade, but an Old Testament Jew like yourselves, and am also of the Dispersion—*to us Jews of the Dispersion*] is the word of this salvation sent forth" (Acts xiii. 16-41). Fidelity unto death is Pauline and apostolic, but so also is sympathetic common sense.

I have heard Bishop William Taylor, the noted advocate of self-supporting missions, say that, in his judgment, our Christian missionaries have not always acted wisely at this point. They have sometimes begun their work in a community by showing the manifest absurdities of their heathen hearers' beliefs. This aroused opposition at the start; the heathen provided themselves

with books hostile to Christianity; an intellectual war was begun, and no good accomplished. His own plan of approach was different. Making no direct attack upon the peculiar rites and beliefs of his hearers, he spoke to them as men and sinners, and preached to them Jesus as the Holy and Merciful One who alone could satisfy their needs. Once they knew Jesus as Lord, their paganism would lose its power and fall away.

While preparing this lecture—if you will pardon a personal incident—I was agreeably interrupted by the visit of a young Japanese who had recently come to this country to take a course in theology. In Japan he had studied for some time under an old pupil and friend of mine, now a missionary in that land. I inquired about the work of my far-off friend: "Oh, he is one of the best," was the reply; "he identifies himself in every way, in living and in speaking, with the people." "Identifies himself"—makes himself *the same* as those whom he serves, for their sakes and in Jesus' name. It was a good report; and I tell of it now as an illustration of that love and wisdom which you will show, I trust, in your own ministry, whether it be in the land of your birth or six thousand miles away.

Never assail a prejudice or find fault with a custom unnecessarily. There is some open door to your hearer's heart; find it and enter, instead of vainly beating at doors that are barred. No compromise of principle, no base compliance, no disloyalty to the truth, no vulgarizing of manners or speech, but sympathy and adaptation—that is the sensible and apostolic way of "gaining the more."

Nor is it through men's modes of thought alone, but through these together with their modes of speech, that

we find entrance into their hearts. We need to talk their language as well as to think their ideas. It is not a question of scholarship, but of fitness. It was the prayer of a translator of the Bible into the dialect of the Nez Percés of our Northwest coast: "Give, gracious Lord, a more correct knewledge of the language and customs of this people, and of their manners of thought, that I may be able to give the truths of thy Holy Word correctly in this language. May I in no instance be left to convey a wrong impression." Oh for the power to take the words that people best know and use, the most affecting and meaningful, and in the divine energy of the gospel speak them full of the word of life!

II

Follies

What are some of the follies that easily beset the Christian preacher?

1. *Impatience of criticism.* Mere fault-finding may be disregarded. It is as unintelligent and unkind as it is common. But a certain measure of genuine criticism is not only inevitable but useful. We are all beset with faults that mar our ministry, and for the most part we are unconscious of them. "The defects in a preacher are soon spied. . . . Dr. Justus Jonas has all the good virtues and qualities a man may have"—so discourses Martin Luther in his "Table-Talk," concerning one of his professorial colleagues and dearest friends—"yet merely because he hums and spits, the people cannot bear the good and honest man." The people, it would seem, might have overlooked such defects of manner; but much more, "the good and honest man" might have corrected them when their hurtfulness became apparent. Perhaps he was voluntarily unaware of it. Are we willing to look our faults squarely in the face? Probably not. Let them be made to appear, and forthwith they are met with a denial or an apology. Even the pupil is inclined to hide them from his teacher. Much more will the preacher be found shrinking from any criticism, be it ever so kind and judicious, from members of his congregation. Now is your time to get rid of these hindrances to a successful ministry, as yet in their formative state, before they become a part of the very tissue and habit of life. Yet strange to say,

now is the time when you are likely to feel their exposure most sensitively. President Ebenezer Porter, one of the wisest friends of ministerial students, was well worthy of being listened to when he said, "I have always observed in circles of ministers that, other things being equal, the youngest men are the least patient of criticism." Is it a sign of youthful self-conceit? Let us bear to be told of our faults.

2. *External imitation.* Every man is an imitator, and ought to be. The debt we owe to the good example of others is incalculable. But the true imitating is internal. It is to catch the spirit of another, to receive the stimulus of his inner life, to follow his principles of conduct. The taking of such moral food does not destroy one's individuality any more than the material food taken by two persons at the same table makes their stature or features or complexion the same. It is assimilated and wrought into the personal life. There is no attempt to undo the Creator's work by making one soul the duplicate of another. But external imitation does involve such an attempt; and the sorriest of failures is a foregone conclusion.

In the case of the preacher, it is the copying of some other speaker's manner, tones of voice, turns of expression. These are not the truth and spirit that are in the man, the real sources of his power. They are only idiosyncrasies—the modes in which, according to his particular make-up, he expresses himself to others. It is by no means to be inferred that they would serve the other man equally well. It is certain that they would not. For the two men are two *men,* two souls, with an infinitude of differently proportioned and adjusted tastes, tendencies, and powers; and not two coins from the

same mold of the mint. Express *yourself,* as a speaker and as a man. God does demand that all our powers be laid upon his altar; but to grasp after another man's and despise our own—who has required this at our hand? Deep in its childlike simplicity was the idea of the little girl who, when asked why she did not care to be her elder sister, replied, "Because God made me *me.*"

Put your ear to a phonograph, and sure enough you will hear a sort of human speech. As the cylinder turns, the words are given off. But such thin, ghostly sounds: there is no power in them. A preacher may have an oratorical temperament so impressionable that the imitation of other speakers seems almost inevitable, and is well-nigh perfect. You might hear him when, were he invisible, you would suppose yourself to be listening to the other man. But there would be one significant difference: while the original might be fascinating, the copy would be feeble and tiresome—the phonographic mimicry of a living voice.

One surprising thing about the copyist is, that he seems more likely to be enamored of faults than of excellences. Some physical infirmity, or some ridiculous eccentricity, in spite of which a certain strong speaker makes his impression on an audience, is imitated, through the foolish fancy that in it somehow is the hiding of his power. In other cases, little peculiarities that are neither faults nor excellences are imagined to possess a wonderful significance. We try to catch the trick of the eloquent speaker, just as if there could be any trick. Just as if it were not true in every art that it is the energizing spirit that makes the master. We pick up clods instead of mining for coal or gold—it is so much easier. What did the admirers of the inimitable John B. Mc

Ferrin imitate except his nasal tone? Phillips Brooks tells of a famous orator that he once heard, in company with an intelligent friend who was himself a public speaker. On their way home, his friend, who seemed deeply impressed and thoughtful, asked him: "Did you see where his power lay?" "No," was the reply, "did you?" "Yes," he said; "I watched him, and it is in the double motion of his hand. When he wanted to solemnize and calm and subdue us, he turned the palm of his hand down; when he wanted to inspire us, he turned the palm of his hand up. That was it."

This singular blunder is similar to the fallacy of *post hoc ergo propter hoc* in logic. Two things appear close together in time and space; therefore one is the cause of the other. Some Paraguay Indians refused to let the missionaries baptize their children, because they had observed that one or more children died soon after baptism. Some educated young Americans see an eloquent speaker turn the palm of his hand up and down, or learn that Dr. Chalmers began speaking with the forefinger of his right hand on his manuscript, or that Candlish had the habit of thumping the pulpit-desk, or that Summerfield often let his open palm rest upon the open Bible, or that Frederick Robertson held his notes in his hand and crumpled them more than he used them, or that Moody carried his own Bagster Bible with him into the pulpit—and forthwith they infer that an important causal connection must exist between these simple actions and the power of speech accompanying them, and that they too may command some such power by a similar use of their hands. Massillon was wiser and truer to himself: "I shall not preach like them," was his comment on the celebrated preachers of the day to whom he had listened.

Was it not partly because of this spirit that he became as good a preacher as the best of them all in that golden age of French pulpit eloquence?

Some of the most sincere and eminent men, however, have found it hard to check this instinctive tendency to imitation. It is said that Dr. James A. Duncan, in whom the mimetic faculty was very strong, would avoid hearing certain preachers when he himself had to preach a few hours afterwards—such was his inclination to imitate their speaking habits. Even Spurgeon has acknowledged: "I am myself, by a kind of irresistible influence, drawn to be an imitator; so that a journey to Scotland or Wales will for a week or two materially affect my pronunciation and tone. Strive against it I do; but there it is, and the only cure I know of is to let the mischief die a natural death." In a man like Spurgeon the "natural death" must soon occur; for the destruction of the unreal is the real—the cure of external imitation is earnestness.

3. *Plagiarism.* I have seen the following advertisement quoted from a recent English newspaper: "Original MS. Sermons.—The widow of a clergyman is willing to dispose of the remainder of her husband's discourses, which are sound and practical, and adapted to any class of hearers. Address," etc. Similar proofs of the public and professional use of other men's sermons are said to be common in the Church of England. Probably the reading of the Homilies in the congregation by the minister, as prescribed in the Thirty-nine Articles, has encouraged the practice. There seems to be no such activity in the sermon trade in our own country; but the evidences of plagiarism in the American pulpit are not altogether wanting. If sermons are not

bought in our churches, they are sometimes stolen, which is worse.

The conditions in which plagiarism arises are easy to discover. One seems to be ignorance. I have known college students and even young preachers who apparently saw no evil in delivering other men's productions as their own. But such cases can hardly be numerous. Indolence and the desire for applause are doubtless the more frequent causes. Plagiarism relieves the preacher of the labor of thinking out a subject for himself and presenting it in his own language. Not only so; it puts in his mouth more attractive words than he can hope, with all his toil, to produce, and may thus win him compliments and reputation. When these are the motives, it becomes not simply folly, but sin.

The pulpit plagiarist is not without a plea in defense of his practice. He may say, "My duties are such that I have not time always to prepare an original discourse." As if the filching of another preacher's sermon, in whole or in part, were a mere matter of expediency, containing no moral element: as if a man had not better do nothing than do wrong.

Or the plagiarist may say: "How many men can claim to be original thinkers? Inasmuch, then, as we are dependent on others for nearly all our ideas, why not make the freest use of them?" There is truth enough in this fallacy to render it dangerous. If absolutely new and unique thought were required, then indeed would few speakers continue to be heard in the world. Moreover, the substance of the preacher's message is given him in Holy Scripture. Any gospel originated by him would be "not another," but a perversion of the gospel of Christ. But these are not the points in question.

It is as true to say that every man is original as to say that no man is original. If each mind not only occupies its own exclusive point of view, but differs from all others more strongly than each voice from all other voices and each face from all other faces, how can it be exactly the same as any other in its forms of thought and speech? Its activity must bear the marks of individuality. Not indeed as to the fundamental facts and truths with which it deals—not as to the earth and sky upon which it looks out through the bodily eyes; but as to the thousand aspects in which these may present themselves to a *person,* under the touch of personal experience.

Visit the Patent Office in Washington. New mechanical inventions are being constantly added to the already vast collection. But these all are merely the representatives of numberless original contrivances and manipulations of which each farm and workshop has its own. Is there nothing analogous to this in other spheres of thought?

Ask an architect to build you a house. He requires no new kind of material. The same clay, wood, and stone that builders have always chosen, even perhaps from prehistoric times, are good enough. Indeed, there is little else to be had. But you will not get just such a house as your father or your grandfather occupied. It will not be exactly like your neighbor's. Let the architect put his own present life into the old materials, and there will arise a new and unique building. But much more plastic are words and ideas than bricks and lumber. Numberless are the possible original sermons made of the same unchangeable truths of the gospel. All that is needed is the live architectonic hand.

True, each mind does not go to work solitary and un-

aided upon a few fundamental principles, and so evolve its views and discourses. Help is received abundantly. There is a ceaseless interchange of ideas from mind to mind. Our intellectual atmosphere—if I may use still another figure—is full of living germs from numberless sources. We cannot choose but take them in. What we may and should choose is to help them grow. It need not concern you where the thought-germs of your sermon came from. You gathered them, either unawares or purposely, here and there. But it does concern you to raise your own mental fruit, and not depend upon your neighbor for that—above all, not to exhibit his as if it were yours.

Again, the plagiarist may use the argument: "I must give the people the best possible; on my bookshelves are sermons and parts of sermons far better than any that I could compose; why should not they be preached for the benefit of the congregation?" I have a friend who acted upon this principle, on a certain occasion; and before delivering the sermon, he distinctly stated its authorship. That was honest. "But such a statement," says the plagiarist, "would detract from the force of the sermon." Unquestionably; and the objection implies a truth that is fatal to his argument. The people would not be impressed in listening to a preacher's recitation of what is known to be another man's composition. Why? Because what they desire and need is preaching. They do not attend upon our ministry for the sake of the abstract truth or the well-chosen words they shall hear. Could they not find these in better form at home? Neither do they come—those of them, at least, that we are chiefly bound to consider—as to a public declamation. They claim that they shall be met in the house of

God by a living man. They would hear "truth through personality." Thoughts about God as old as Revelation, but which we who stand in the pulpit are thinking now, vitalized by our own experience, colored by our own emotions; Divine truth humanly appropriated and personally expressed; the word of God in the man's own heart, spoken by his own lips—that is preaching: and it is incompatible with the recitation, either with or without acknowledgment, of the words of another. The lay-reader may serve a useful purpose, but he is not a preacher; and the dishonest declaimer is an impostor.

4. *Dispersion of labor.* There is a state of mind familiar to us all which psychologists would describe as "dispersed attention." The mental energy is diffused over many objects; none of them is held up steadily in the consciousness; and as a necessary result, no genuine and thorough intellectual work is done. Similar to this dispersion of the labor of attention is the expenditure of labor upon a multiplicity of employments in one's vocation. The energetic and aspiring worker is betrayed into the blunder of putting his hand to too many undertakings. The distinction is not properly made between the principal and the subordinate, nor between that which should be done by himself personally and that which may better be done by others under his supervision.

It is a folly that leads to wisdom's side, but is nevertheless a folly. There are preachers, young and old, who are safe from all danger of committing it; but there are others of whom it is true, that if they had undertaken not less work but fewer employments, their success would have been greater. If we have been instructed to "fear"—or love, as the case may be—"the man of one

book," there is equal reason to love or fear the man of one work.

Refuse to let the life-stream of ministerial activity broaden at the expense of purity and depth. Neglect your pulpit for nothing. Go from it into pastoral service and genial mingling with your fellow-men, and back to it furnished for better instruction. Conduct congregational worship; administer sacraments; put your whole heart into the prayer meeting; hold special services for the revival of the church and the salvation of the unconverted. Be a seeker of souls personally and privately. Then, as the appointed overseer of the congregation, the ruling as well as the teaching elder, preside over its councils and direct its movements. Then—have you not fulfilled your ministry? Temporarily, or in some emergency, it may be expedient to devote yourself to some other work—for example, to superintend a Sunday school, or to take the chief part in the building of a church edifice. But set this down in your plan as exceptional.

It should be our aim, as it was that of the apostles, so to organize and influence the congregation as to bring out all its working power. The successful pastor is one whose church is ever becoming less dependent on him. He is a leader no less than a pastor, his church an army rather than a flock. Through his very power and usefulness, it develops "helps, governments, tongues," by means of which its organization is perfected and its life diversified and enlarged.

I am quite ready to admit that, in the present day especially, "with the advancing springtide of modern Christian intelligence and enterprise," the pastor "must be, in some sense, a man of affairs." Indeed, he cannot

organize and administer the working forces of his church without some such qualification. "We have in St. Bartholomew's parish," says its pastor, Dr. David H. Greer, "a good many departments of parochial activity. We have not only our Sunday schools, and missionary societies, and benevolent societies, but a Swedish mission, and a Chinese mission, and an Armenian mission, and a Syrian mission, and a lodging house, and a loan bureau, and an employment bureau, and a coffee house, and a penny provident fund, and a girls' club, and a boys' club, and a men's club, and a gymnasium, and a kindergarten, and a surgical clinic, and a medical clinic, and an eye and ear clinic—but the list is long enough." The pastor of this institutional church keeps himself in sympathy with all the work of his parish, holds weekly conferences with the heads of departments, stimulates and directs; but he transfers to others whatever can be thus transferred. He has learned to do nothing himself that he can find some one else to do as well, and still finds his hands more than full.

There are many busy ministers, but there is also heard the widespread complaint of "poor preaching." The cases are not rare in which the pulpit, being such as it is, may be said to be respected and endured rather than rejoiced in and responded to as a life-giving power. How is this deficiency to be met? A large question; but one answer is, by more of the life of meditation on the part of him who is required so constantly to teach the word of God. He must have time for meditation. He must cultivate the love of it. There may be many outward activities, but little silent waiting upon God; much movement, but little momentum. The preacher

is constantly to be with living men, but he is also to have his daily "retreat." It will not dehumanize him. It will not make him abstracted and unpractical. It will increase his might in word and deed before God and all the people.

5. *Scolding.* Our ministry has its admonitory function which may not be blamelessly neglected. The very word *repent,* which can never cease to be heard from the lips of an evangelist, implies it. Even upon Timothy, who as a young pastor was bidden not to "rebuke an elder," but to "exhort him as a father," is laid the charge, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching" (2 Tim. iv. 2). To suffer wrongdoing to go unrebuked is often practically to approve it. The child says, "My father knows I do this, and has never forbidden it"; and in that parental silence he finds the approval he is instinctively seeking for some wrong or doubtful course of conduct. Similarly will the silence of the pulpit be interpreted as consent. No desire to get on pleasantly with the people, or to gain their good will as a means of doing them good, can excuse the Christian preacher for the tacit encouragement of sin.

Now what is scolding? It is counterfeit reproof. Not truth, but ill temper; not authority, but complaint; not the quickening stroke of a nobler upon a weaker and less enlightened conscience, but the biting humor of an effeminate and troubled mind; not reproof and rebuke "with all long-suffering and teaching," but rebuke and reproof without teaching and with impatience and unkindness. It is one of the external forms of fretting; and its proper effect is to irritate, not to convict. With whatever admixture of honest intention it may be applied, scolding is a false remedial agent, predetermined by its very nature to work mischief.

The favorite topics of the clerical scold are not the most serious moral transgressions and failures, but the minor blemishes of conduct; and as these are everywhere to be found—and he can easily see them in others—he is never lacking in occasions and materials.

One additional suggestion. The minister in the pulpit is under peculiar obligation not to scold, or in any way unnecessarily to offend his hearers, on account of his protected position. No one can answer back. Under the old English law, a scold was liable to be fastened to a ducking-stool and plunged a number of times into the water. The preacher, having no such punishment to dread, ought to be doubly careful not to deserve it. The pulpit is a chair of authority, but it is not a "Coward's Castle." No, no; let some poor, untaught, and weak-nerved woman fret and scold, if she will; but as for us, let us determine to be, in the most Christian sense of the word, Christian gentlemen. And let us remember that probably no sinner was ever scolded into the kingdom of God, nor stumbling saint scolded into a more perfect life.

Well might the prayer of Alexander Vinet be offered by us all: "But, O Lord and Saviour, give us to love as thou lovest, to hate as thou hatest, and to reprove as thou reprovest."

III

The Use of Books

Perhaps we have all been tempted at times to ask whether much reading will not mar the simplicity of life. Does it not shut us up in man's close, artificial world rather than lead us forth into God's great out-of-doors? Back to nature and life, back to contemplation and prayer, without this bewildering multitude of written intermediaries fluttering in our faces. We hear in an eloquent speech some such sentiment as this from one of Henry Drummond's earlier addresses, and are ready to confess our sympathy with it: "Books are the great delusion of the present age. We find them everywhere. Nature is mocked and put in the background." We are told the story of James Gwin, a pioneer Methodist preacher, who, when surprise was expressed that he could preach as he did with so little knowledge of books, replied, "I know what they make books out of"; and somehow we feel, There is the true man. Now it would be hard to find a better motto for the conduct of life than *Christian simplicity.* If, then, by reading books we do not get more of "what they make books out of," or even lose something of the book-stuff of our own nature, the question as to how many we should read is a very simple one—the fewer the better.

But simplicity, let us remember, is of the soul, and not of the outward circumstances and instruments of action. It is in what we are rather than in what we handle or use. It is singleness of aim, and must be kept up not by stripping life bare of the accumulating riches

of the world, but by using these riches, with a self-renouncing will, for the attainment of the highest end. I have known a man to run a railway train for twenty years with the ingenuousness of a child: many a man drives an ox team with a corrupt and tricky mind. Would it add to the simple reality of life, in our time, if we should decide to dwell in a tent, to grind our corn in a hand-mill, and to send our messages by such a "post" as furnished the symbol of swiftness in the days of Job? An equal affectation would it be to despise the printing press. For, in the whole world what can we lay our hand on, whether natural product or manufactured article, that is comparable in value to a book?

Nor will it avail to say, "I do not pretend to read everything that comes out nowadays; it is too much, too much," and find relief from this oppressive thought of the impossible by reading well-nigh nothing at all. If printing is "the art preservative of all arts," we may call reading the art acquisitive of all arts. Think what a world is thrown open to any one who knows the secret of letters. True, it is cursed with false lights, and sloughs of corruption, and ways that seem right unto a man, whereas the end thereof is the ways of death. Nevertheless it is a world of limitless knowledge, truth, and joy. Instead of finding fault with the education that was given us in youth, let us thank God that we were ever taught to read our English mother-tongue. It need not spoil our minds; it may exalt and enrich them unto eternity.

We are no more required to read "everything" that is written than to hear everything that is spoken, or to see everything that is done. What is the requirement? To use the literary opportunities of the twentieth cen-

tury with a Christian aim as pure and true as if they were no more abundant and perplexing than the like opportunities of a thousand years ago.

Men have to read professionally. Almost every trade and business, in the present day, has its literature. Why not? Is it only the so-called "professions" that represent a greater knowledge and skill than can be gained through association with a few fellow-laborers? The man, for example, who supposes his own observation and experience, with a little oral instruction, sufficient to make him a perfect farmer or gardener, is paying a poor compliment to the possibilities of his chosen life work. As to the preacher, the literature of his calling makes its appeal with ten thousand voices of warning and of hope, of teaching and inspiration. To let it pass unheeded would be the height of intellectual folly or pride.

But what is every man's first calling? Not to learn how to build houses or cultivate the ground, not to be a teacher or a preacher, but to become a man. Accordingly, in the kind providence of God, we have been taught the art of reading, first of all, for our personal *becoming* and well-being. Not for success in our vocation, whatever it may be, but for success in ourselves. That is why we should know the lives of representative men, their experiences, acts, and achievements; why we should let our hearts be stirred by the great thoughts of the thinkers; why we should open our eyes, at the poet's interpretative word, to the beauty and glory of the world; why we should see something of the wonderland of science; why we should take the hymns and prayers and spiritual meditations of other souls into our own. One of the best friends of my early years in the ministry said to me: "I read no books but such as I can get ser-

mons out of." His example did me good—though not as a good example. It set me thinking. Suppose a farmer should say, "I read no books but such as I can get wheat and cattle out of," or a merchant, "I read no books but such as I can get trade out of." Now it is true that the product which the preacher aimed at in his reading was higher than that which a farmer or a merchant would expect from the soil or the market—sermons are better than wheat and trade—but the principle in all such cases is the same. It is professional rather than personal. Or, if you please, let us see how the preacher's principle would look if applied to that Book which is to be without a competitor in all our reading: "I read the Bible simply that I may get sermons out of it." Our calling, indeed, does so intermingle the personal and the ministerial that it is often impossible to separate them in fact. Nevertheless the two are always distinguishable in idea; and the man, not the preacher, is first.

But the best is the friend of the good. It is out of the affluence of the personal that the professional is enriched. Therefore, the preacher who says, "I will be first of all a Christian man," will have large and ever-increasing resources available for his ministry. Compare him, if you will, with one who should say, "I will be first a preacher, and then a Christian."

It is from this point of view that we must look at the question of taking time to read. The complaint is sometimes heard, "I have no time for books"; which is, being interpreted, "I have no love for books," or, "I am disinclined to mental exertion." To say that we are under such constant necessity to teach and preach, and to do all the varied work of the Christian ministry, that we

must leave off reading, is as if a philanthropist should complain of having so much money to give that he had no time to make it. What amount of time, and what favoring circumstances, do we ask?—a month, a week, a day, in some cozy and well-appointed library, with nothing to do but to con the printed page? It is quite unnecessary. Wesley's inner chamber of study and prayer was for a number of years his chaise. That was after he had reached the age of sixty-two: theretofore his reading room had been the saddle of his horse, and had changed its locality at the rate of five thousand miles a year. But we hardly have need of historic examples. Are there not, in the circle of our own observation, men of the pulpit who are eager readers of books, and who, so far from being made neglectful of duty to the people by their reading, are constantly renewed in spirit and vitalized for all practical work? Let us become followers of them, and scorn to practice upon ourselves the delusion of "No time to get what I need from the wondrous world of letters."

Still, a man with a book in his hand may be very triflingly employed. He may turn its pages simply to be doing something, or to please an enervated fancy, or to while away an hour, or to excuse himself from thinking. Like a man smoking, he may satisfy his conscience with the dreamy thought that he is doing something—"He knew not what to do, and so he read." Great is the waste of time over the journalistic and other literature of the day.

Therefore, *read with a distinct purpose and plan.* Not that desultory reading is worthless. It has its uses. Some fresh and resultful idea, some noble impulse, may pass from the casually opened volume or periodical into

the prepared mind. The book that chanced to fall into our hands and was read through and through, may have become, like some chance acquaintance, a good and helpful friend. Indeed, a strong ruling idea like that of the writer or preacher, will find material for its use in almost any literature that may come in its way. Thus it will include even desultory and purposeless reading in its general purpose. But this cannot be regarded as more than incidental. A general purpose must be supported by specific choices and plans. To get an education one must choose a school and pursue a prescribed curriculum of studies. Similarly, no matter how strong and commanding the preacher's purpose to turn everything into sermons, he will lose immeasurably by reading at haphazard.

Read *authors*. Choose your poet, your thinker, your theological or religious writer, and really make his acquaintance. Study his principal works. Let your soul lie open to his influence—remembering always that no man, however charming and masterful, is infallible or a perfect master. Learn about the man himself. If possible, get his biography. Trace the growth of his mind; read expositions and criticisms of his writings. You will seek the company of such an author, as of a prophet and friend of the soul. Some of his words you will turn to again and again, for consolation, for guidance, for enlargement of thought, as need or inclination may prompt. You will not be of the young woman's mind who said that she had "read Browning once, and therefore did not care to read him any more."

Read *subjects*. When, for example, you purpose to preach on a certain topic, or to prepare a sermon upon each of its several aspects, that topic will give direction,

during all the time of preparation, both to your own thinking and to your search for information and suggestions from other men. You will look at it from various angles of vision, and will call this and that book to your aid till the work is completed.

But apart from any immediate demand of the pulpit, we must, if truly in earnest, find our way to topical reading. We will group our books about the subject to be illumined. And we will use them differently. Some will be read through from cover to cover. Of some the second reading will yield far more than the first. Some we will merely search for a certain line of facts or ideas. Some we shall be able to read rapidly, picking the meaning off the page as quickly as the eye picks off the words. We shall find use for the pen in making outlines, or abstracts, or marginal notes. At the very least we will mark the most significant passages for review and special consideration. But however varied as to matter and method, and however long-continued, the whole procedure is concentrated upon one thing—upon the subject in hand. Nor must we be lured away by any other subject or any other book, however inviting. That is purposeful reading, and without it we cannot hope for the best results. No large amount of money can be picked up in the street; comparatively little fruit, and no grain at all, will grow of itself; and the wealth of the mind, like our money and our harvests, must be gained according to a purpose and a plan.

This suggests the second bit of counsel that I will venture to offer: *Read what you are hungry for, and read on till satisfied.* Too broad a rule, it may seem, to be of service to the omnivorous reader. For there is such a type. Have we not all caught ourselves at times indulg-

ing the insane desire to read everything? The sight of a great library excites a humiliating sense of how little we know, and a morbid craving to be a devourer of literature. It is as if one should go into a fruit store and exclaim, "Oh that I could eat all these peaches, and grapes, and all the delicious tropical fruit in the world! I have consumed so little food in my life." Enough is better than a feast. We are to read, as we eat, not for the momentary pleasure attending the act, but for life and strength. It is easy to handle too many books for all the thinking we do. Mere swallowing is not the object. Or it is possible that our secret wish is rather the reputation of being scholarly and well read, in which case we should do well to remember the plain-spoken maxim of Bernard of Clairvaux: "There are those who wish for knowledge only that they may be known to possess it, and that is unworthy vanity."

On the other hand, it might be objected, "Suppose I should not be mentally hungry for anything." Said a young preacher whom a friend was trying to interest in some new books—showing him such a commentary, and such a bright, fresh treatise in theology—"Oh! B——, take them away. *I hate 'em all.*" Now we need not reply as the old-time philosopher replied to the man who complained of having no appetite: "Then do not eat." The intellectual appetite may not be dealt with quite so summarily. Let us rather set this objection aside as impossible. Certainly there is none of us so dead as to feel no desire for "more life and fuller." What is often lacking is the energy to gratify such desires. Not the knowledge and power of the book, but the labor necessary to their attainment, is the thing we "hate."

Again, one may be hungry for the wrong kind of

food. But here also we must assume the existence of a healthy appetite. There are dirt-eaters—so we are told—in certain regions of our country, who seem to enjoy a daily diet of plaster and clay. The Digger Indian revels in worms and beetles and decaying flesh. The diseased appetite cannot be trusted to follow dietetic laws, either as to the quantity or the quality of food; and of course the same thing is true of the appetencies of the mind. The man who has a taste for literary dirt or trash or poison must simply refuse to gratify his taste. He is morally and intellectually depraved. The youth who is fascinated at a bookstall with such a title as "The Poisoned Gumdrop; or, the Candy Woman's Revenge," is not in the audience to-day. I am speaking of the sound mind, or at least of that which is sound in the mind.

The book thus chosen will probably be well chosen. An unperverted instinct is a trustworthy guide. It serves well in the animal world. It directs the inhabitant of the tropics to indulge freely in fruit juices, and the Greenlander to consume the whale blubber and seal fat which are adapted to sustain life in his frozen home. The learned physiologist may teach that we ought to eat so many ounces of food daily, and that it should consist of such a proportion of proteids, of carbohydrates, and so on; the learned professor of literature may lay out a suitable course of reading to be taken within a designated time; but in neither case may we disregard the inner guide of hunger and taste. The book that a healthy-minded man wants is probably the book that he needs. Most certainly it is the one that he is best prepared mentally to assimilate. Task work in such a matter is of little profit. It is not unusual, I fear, for even the

young preacher to pursue a prescribed course of study merely because it is prescribed, without genuine interest or enthusiasm. So far as any personal good to himself is concerned, he might as well let it alone, and occupy his time with something else. Knowledge and truth cannot be forced upon him. What he has an ear for he will hear; what he seeks he will find; what he loves, that he will understand.

Still, our tastes, expressing as they do our interests, are higher and lower. Give the higher the preference always, and read a little above your present self rather than wholly upon its level.

There is some subject that you are interested in—some truth of revelation, of nature, of life and conduct, that has excited your sense of wonder. The inspiration of the Scriptures, the life of Jesus, the atonement, Christian perfection, the Last Things, the Church as a missionary society, theism, preaching, the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century, the conscience, the Book of Job, the senses and the intellect, social conditions—whatever the truth, the fact, the historical event that touches your heart, feel out after it, and take advantage of the time of excited curiosity to make it your own. Now is the time to think, and as an indispensable aid to the thinking, to read your subject. Get the best that has been thought and said upon it, so far as available; and until you are ready to lay it aside, let no other subject claim its place.

Satisfied, indeed, you need never expect to be. The man who knows is the man that is all astir to learn. It is the old historian who would like to have a lifetime in which to study the hard-won progress of mankind and the hand of God in history. It is the accomplished

biologist who spends his vacation with the ferns, or forty years over the bacteria. It was a venerable philosopher, on his deathbed, who turned his head to listen to an intelligent conversation, with the remark: "I should be most happy to die learning something." It was Beethoven, most excellent master of sublime harmonies, who said, near the close of life, "I feel as if I had written scarcely more than a few notes of music." It was Michael Angelo of whom the story has been told that, in old age and blindness, studying with his fingers a Greek statue in the gallery of the Vatican, he was heard to say: "Great is this marble; greater still the hand that carved it; greatest of all, the God who fashioned the sculptor. I still learn! I still learn!" Here is a foretoken of immortality. Our minds are enormously over-endowed, both in aspiration and in capacity, for the present world. Their predestined sphere is beyond, that they may go on their way of knowledge and of reverence forever. But I do not speak of this—only of that comparative satisfaction that arises from a fair and usable present-life knowledge. Read your subject, then, till thus satisfied, and mentally free to turn to some other.

The opposite precept is, *Read what you are not hungry for, and read on till you get both food and appetite.* Here, for illustration, is a preacher who has no taste for literature. He is fond of systematic and practical theology, of critical exegesis, of religious philosophy, and is quite content with the knowledge of such subjects. Anything distinctively emotional, imaginative, or human, he is inclined to despise: for him the poets of all lands have tuned their harps in vain. To such a man a few vital literary books, whether he likes them at first or not, would bring greatly needed riches.

Another preacher reads literature almost exclusively. The poets, the essayists, the story-tellers are his teachers, while the thinkers interest him hardly at all. He is well pleased with ideas, but averse to thought. He will work hard at Browning, thankful when after much rereading the meaning comes out intelligible and beautiful; but he does not even turn the pages of Fairbairn. The image of beauty, the stir of emotion, the realistic picture of life, and religious truth in scrappy, unsystematic form—these are his only mental delight. What he needs as a reader is something to strengthen and direct his power of thought. He must learn to analyze as well as to imagine, to reason as well as to catch suggestions, to think as well as to feel, to construct his knowledge into ordered strength and completeness.

May I suggest one more guiding principle? *Read with the whole self.* Not with the eyes only. Neither with the mere verbal memory. Said a vivacious schoolboy to his father: "I am studying physical geography now." "And what sort did you study before?" "Why, *manual* geography." "And what is that?" He seemed surprised at the question. It was "A Manual of Geography"; that was its name, and what more could be learned or reasonably asked about it? Whenever we catch up the printed word and leave the idea behind, our reading, like the schoolboy's, is chiefly a matter of the eyes.

Here is the evil of careless or excessive reading: it is unaccompanied with thought. Often it does not even wake up the mind to the point where "dreams begin to feel the truth and stir of day." The reading rooms of the early Christian Church were called *thinking places* (φροντιστήρια). A few precious manuscripts were kept in them—that was all; but the people came, such as were

able, to read and think. So, in the present day, an owner of books may have a library, but a reader must have a study. A book, like a pen, is a tool to think with. It must be handled with the *understanding*. But not with the understanding only. Put the sweetest poem of the century into the hands of a man who is on tiptoe for facts and arguments, or a manual of devotion into the hands of a mere theologian, and it will bring nothing but weariness. What he is prepared to find is not there.

Even in looking at the simplest natural object, we see it chiefly with the *imagination*. What the eye beholds as a mere patch of color, the imagination pictures, within and without, on all sides, as a solid object with an origin, a use, and a history. What the eye reports as a few inches of black and white on a plane surface, the imagination recognizes as the photograph of a friend; and it sees not the black and white color, but *him*. A biographer of Frederick Robertson, seeking materials for his book, in the town of Brighton, called on a shopkeeper, who took him into a back room, and, pointing to a small print of the famous young preacher, said: "When I am tempted to be mean, I run into this back parlor and look at it; then, whenever I feel afraid of meeting difficulty, I come and look into his eyes and they put new force into me." The proposed biography, after its publication, might have been used in a similar way with even greater effectiveness. For word-signs, like photographs, are seen with the imagination. Put the book down. Construct for yourself the scene, the character, the course of events, the variously related ideas, that it has evoked. Your constructions, indeed, will not always be just the same as the author's. But the best service he

Therefore—to urge but a single reason—be not a novel-self.

Therefore—to urge but a single reason—be not a novel-reader. A fictitious story of true insight and clean, high ideals, now and then—and at the right time of the day—for mental refreshment; another, even if not so good, to represent the light literature of the age, in book and periodical, that you may know what many of the people among whom you live, and whom you are trying to influence, are reading—that is enough. Ordinary novel-reading, such as creates the demand for the myriad popular works of fiction, overloads and enfeebles the imagination. It is pitiable. "I am taking no solid food," drones your pale-faced friend; "for months I have lived on fluids, very much diluted but highly seasoned, and especially hot with spices." The result would be a flabby and toneless body, or worse. Similar will be the collapse of the novel-fed imagination.

The art of reading is perfected in the *heart and conscience.* It is of the spirit. Not biography alone, with its undying charm, but all true literature is humanizing. Indeed, is it not all, in a true sense, biographical, confessional—the select and nourishing fruit of that which lies deepest, not in intellects only, but in *men?* Literature is distilled life. It would be quite impossible for us to have at command the works of five hundred architects or painters or inventors, or of even one preacher; but we may have as our own, side by side upon the walls of a little room, the works of five hundred authors. Thus, above every other place upon earth, a library, to him that knows it, becomes a peopled solitude. Great spirits hover about him; human lives, throbbing with joy and pain, are lived in his presence; other souls touch

his own. It was fitting that such studies as rhetoric, poetry, and the classics should have been called the *humanities.* So the revival of literature in the Renaissance was aptly described as *humanism;* and it helped to open the way for that greater revival, the Reformation.

A book is a man revealed at his best. We feel this even in writings from which the personal element seems to be almost wholly excluded. A young friend wrote to me not long ago: "I am going to whirl books through the press some day." How little as yet did he know what it costs in the expenditure of the self to make even one real book. Through the modern mystery of the telephone, we may hear the voice of an absent friend talking to us; but the tones are uninspiring and the messages are usually commonplace and brief. Through the ancient mystery of letters, we may hear, not only from all distant places but from across the centuries and millenniums, the choicest utterances of the loftiest souls—perhaps a genius in his most creative moods, perhaps a thinker in his deepest thought, perhaps an idealist in his divinest aspirations, perhaps a saint in his devoutest communion with God. If we will, that is the company to which we are welcomed.

After all, will it not tend to withdraw us from the actual life of the world, or at least to abate our evangelical fervor and power? It may, through the overuse or perversion of the "good gifts" and the "perfect boons" of the Father of lights. But if so, we are to despise not them, but our own selfishness and folly. It is this folly that is so vividly portrayed by Tennyson in his stately poem of "The Palace of Art." A lover of the beautiful in art and literature undertakes to withdraw from his

kind and live a life of undisturbed intellectual gratification. So he builds for himself a "lordly pleasure-house," high on a "huge crag-platform," without any stairway for visitors. There he gathers books and paintings, whatever can minister to a cultured artistic and literary taste, or gratify the spirit of contemplation. There he will abide, his soul

> Communing with herself: "All these are mine,
> And let the world have peace or wars,
> 'Tis one to me."

Like the illustrious king in ancient Jerusalem, "whatsoever his eyes desired he kept not from them, nor withheld his heart from any joy." His joys, indeed, were not sensuous, but were none the less selfish for being æsthetic and intellectual. For a time all seemed to be going well; it was a delicious existence, thus to hold converse with the geniuses and the wise men of the ages, and, save for such companionship, to sing his song of life alone, while the "people," like "darkening droves of swine," were grazing and wallowing on the muddy plain below. But his triumph was of short duration. Fear and loathing came upon him. His soul was plagued with sore despair.

> She howled aloud, "I am on fire within.
> There comes no manner of reply;
> What is it that will take away my sin,
> And save me lest I die?"

Cut off from nature, from man, from God, his soul was eaten as by fire in the hell of selfishness.

> So when four years were wholly finished,
> She threw her royal robes away.
> "Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,
> "Where I may mourn and pray.

"Yet pull not down my palace towers that are
So lightly, beautifully built:
Perchance I may return with others there,
When I have purged my guilt."

Selfish culture is ruinous. So, likewise, are selfish ignorance and prejudice. We must have literature, but not for its own sake—for man's sake, and for the doing of God's will. Man was not made for literature, but literature for man. All for Christ! Let us crown him Lord of the world of letters, to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him here, as everywhere. The reading that tends toward a Christless life is a blight and a snare to the soul; but the reading that "tends to the knowledge and love of God," in no narrow and conventional sense, but according to all God's revelations of himself, from within the soul and from without; that makes dearer and more interesting the man we pass on the street, and the little child in the home; that helps to open up such treasures of satisfaction and joy in the heart that wealth and applause and all elegant surroundings can be foregone or dismissed without a sigh, as no part of ourselves; that anoints our eyes to see the Divine workmanship in the rocks by the wayside, and a meaning too deep for words in the poorest weed at our feet; that wakens truer thoughts of God and more fruitful service to men,—such is the use and the blessing of books.

Now I have said almost nothing about the supreme Book whose value outweighs, beyond estimation, all other literature. That shall have an hour for itself. We have been looking upon the moon and the stars of light—next, the Sun.

IV

The Man of the Book

It is hard for the inexperienced student to get the information he wishes on the choice of books. Distracted by the ever-increasing number of them, and ignorant of their relative value, he would like to have a list given him of the very best. But who knows the very best for *him?* Such lists as are offered differ widely, according to the knowledge and standpoint of their authors. Besides, in a scientific and book-making age like ours they are always subject to revision. Certain standard works hold their own from generation to generation, in some cases because of intrinsic worth, in others because upheld by scholars and their disciples or imitators; but new books are constantly appearing to compete with those already in the field. The young preacher, eager to spend his money and time to the best advantage, has been misled perhaps more than once by an attractive title, or by the prestige of a successful author, or by a catchy and selfish advertisement—it may be in his own Church paper; so that, small as his library may be, he would gladly exchange a number of volumes for a smaller number of others that promise better. Or perhaps the very book he needs is in his hands, unrecognized. The effort of thought or investigation which it requires in the reader, though as nothing compared with what the author has freely expended upon it, may repel him. A bitter rind and a flinty shell effectually bar the way to a kernel that would be sweet and nourishing indeed, if

once he began really to feed upon it. No; he need not depend on any list of books prepared ready to hand for the class of readers to which he is supposed to belong; he must learn to choose for himself, taking counsel meanwhile of others.

But there is one exception. Whatever volumes may be absent from the Christian preacher's bookshelves, the books of the "Divine Library"—as Jerome happily named it—will be there, to be studied first and last and always. In this conclusion all his counselors and colaborers will agree.

In ascribing to the Bible an incomparable value, we make no reference whatsoever to its literary qualities. It is in fact a body of literature, and may be studied as such. Indeed it must be so studied, if its full meaning is to be appreciated. If we fail to note whether what we are reading be prose or poetry (Gen. xlix.; Job i.-iii.; Isa. x. 28-32), the language of the writer or some sort of quotation (Isa. xxviii. 10; 2 Cor. xii. 16), a declarative or an imperative or an interrogative sentence (John v. 39; xiv. 1; 2 Cor. xii. 15), an elliptical or a complete expression (Ex. xxxii. 32; Psa. xc. 13), a continuous or a parenthesis-broken argument (Rom. v. 12-18; xi. 7, 8), a literal or an allegorical narrative (Gen. i.-iii.; Matt. iii. iv.), we may be sure that our fault will not be less but greater than that of a like carelessness in the reading of any other book. If we take no pains to put ourselves into the intellectual and literary as well as the moral and spiritual atmosphere in which a book of the Bible was written, we shall blunder at every step in exegesis. For it is not a dehumanized and unreal book of our own dreams or *a priori* ideas, but the actual Bible, as it has come down to us, divine-human, from the re-

vealing Spirit, by the hands of men, through the providence of God, that we are to read.

It is true, moreover, that large portions of the Bible—though by no means all of it—are marked by a literary beauty and power unsurpassed in the whole world of literature. But this does not touch the real question. It interests us to learn, for example, that Carlyle called the Book of Job "one of the grandest things ever written with the pen, . . . so soft and great: as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars"; and that James Anthony Froude predicted that one day perhaps this poem will "be seen towering up alone, far away above all the poetry of the world"; that Lord Macaulay has said, "The Bible, a book which, if everything else in our language should perish, would alone suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power"; that Goethe was "convinced that the Bible becomes even more beautiful the more one understands it." But there is no vital biblical significance in these opinions. Were the literary excellence of the Scriptures tenfold greater than it is, this would not represent their real worth. It is their contents—the living soul, not the bodily form—that make them supreme above all other writings. They, and they alone, directly, fully, infallibly, under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, teach the way of eternal life. They "contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." It is not their language but their word, their message, their truth, the heavenly treasure not the earthen vessel, that constitutes the ab-

solute supremacy of the Scriptures for every believer in the Christian revelation.

Let me illustrate. We believe in God. We believe also in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour and Judge of men. How came we to have this faith? what are the sources at which it may be gained, or corrected, or renewed? An outward revelation has been made. In the person of Jesus of Nazareth the Eternal God dwelt among us. To know Jesus was to know the Father. Not only for revelation but also for redemption he came into the world. He loved us and gave himself for us. He who now reigns as Lord of all and "Head over all things to the Church," lived upon earth, the Son of man among the sons of men; so that his friends and disciples and all the people could hear his words, could observe the course of his life, could receive the impress of his presence and personality. Then, by the way of the cross and the conquered tomb, he ascended to the throne of his kingdom. If, therefore, we might possess a biography or memoir of Jesus, what other book in all the world could be named beside it? If we could read the story of his life, and have it with us always, so as to learn what manner of man he was, then indeed might we know whom we have believed; our historic knowledge of the Facts wrought in this world would sustain and enrich our spiritual communion with the glorified Lord. But just such a book is ours in the Gospels—the fourfold record of the Life of lives. Suppose it had never been written; suppose we should have had to depend upon the traditions that might have floated down through the centuries to the present day for our knowledge of what the Son of God, in his historic manifestation, taught and did and was.

Here, then, is the Bible: we have touched the heart of it in the Gospels. The highest significance of all that goes before—history, ritual, psalm, proverb, preaching, prediction—is that of the age-long prophecy of His appearing in whom the hopes of Israel and of all mankind may find fulfillment. The cry of Moses, "Show me, I pray thee, thy glory," was the cry of the whole line of Old Testament prophets; and he who wakened the sleeping prayer in their hearts made answer to it, partial, as they were able to bear it, but an ever-enlarging answer till the Dayspring from on high appeared in the life of Jesus.

> Ah, Moses! had He *turned*, and hadst thou seen
> The pale face crowned with thorns, baptized with tears,
> The eyes of the true man by men belied,
> Thou hadst beheld God's face and straightway died.

What follows the Gospels, completing the record, is the inspired interpretation of that stainless and atoning Life, the teaching of the Cross and the Resurrection.

Shall we compare these Scriptures, then, with any other? It would be an inept comparison. The gifts of genius are gifts from God, the fine achievements of literary art, whether spontaneous or cultivated, are a part of man's true work in the world, the Light that lighteth every man has not shone wholly in vain for any sincere seeker of God in any nation. Let us rejoice in the wealth of living truth in history, poetry, philosophy. Let us be thankful for the teaching of the mathematician and the scientist, who laboriously make out and then write down in precise and unpretentious words a few of the thoughts of the All-wise inwrought in his creation. No wonder that such men should at times "become drunk with the new wine of their discoveries"

—like Noah intoxicated with wine of his own vineyard. Let us gladly recognize the universal moral truth that God gives to men through conscience, and any gleams of religious truth, however beclouded with error, in the literature of the various ethnic religions, from the oldest hymn of the Rig Veda to the latest Sura of the False Prophet. But the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments stand alone, apart from all these productions, unapproachably above them. For if God is the Father Almighty and his Son Jesus Christ the Lord and Saviour of men, then the Bible, whatever its human limitations or peculiarities of mode and form, is the world's book; and there can be no other.

The inference is inevitable that, first, as Christians, and, secondarily, as preachers of the gospel, it is our calling to be men of the Bible. "No doubt you are becoming very familiar with the human body," I once remarked to a young friend who had taken up the study of medicine. "Oh," he replied, "I *live in it* day and night." He was wholly absorbed in his subject; and the entire mechanism of the body with all its life-forces had begun to lie open and visible before his mind's eye. This it is to become a competent physician: what is it to become a competent teacher of biblical truth? Not unreasonably has it been required of us, standing before the elders to receive the Church's ordination to the work of the ministry, that we promise our best endeavors, the Lord being our helper, to be diligent "in reading of the Holy Scriptures and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh." Shall we not pause to consider what such a vow demands, and how it may be kept inviolate?

There can be no richer and more ennobling studies. There can be none so spiritually profitable. It is true that a man who knows only one book, even though it should be the Bible, does not know that. Helps are needed, and it is folly to despise them. As the Bible contains history, one of its companions should be an *atlas;* as some preliminary general knowledge of its contents is desirable, the *introduction* serves a useful purpose; as it is an ancient and oriental volume, the *dictionary* must be consulted; as it is a unitized library containing many parallel or closely related passages distributed through its various books, *marginal references* and a *concordance* are helpful; as it was written in other languages than our own, and not only teaches the profoundest truths but abounds in passages "hard to be understood," the aid of the *commentary* is called for.

Besides, whatever knowledge or truth we can gain from other books may serve to make more evident the value of the one Book. Because it is all from Him who here comes close to the inmost thought and spirit in the Man Christ Jesus. The psychologist is not jealous of the scientist, but serenely hails him as a coworker; because every achievement of natural science enhances the worth of psychology. For it is the human mind, which is the subject-matter of psychology, that works all these scientific achievements. What is greater than chemistry, biology, astronomy? The answer is obvious: The chemist, the biologist, the astronomer. Thus, with all possible enlargement of knowledge, psychology, the science of the knower himself, is magnified. Similarly the Christian theologian may claim every thinker, or poet, or artist, or scientist as a friend and coworker.

For whatever they are able to find of beauty or truth is an expression of that Almighty Spirit from whom is the making of the world. It is theological, biblical, Christian; because in its own way and sphere it shows something of Him who has been pleased to reveal himself supremely as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father who is in heaven. Whether the discoverer of the truth and the setter forth of the beauty know it or not—and sometimes they do not—it is the ways of the infinite and living God that they are learning to trace. Without him the world, both of consciousness and of the senses, would be a realm without a founder or a king, a fine old mansion that, lacking the rule of love, was not a home. "All things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ."

The Bible should be known *by passages*. May the apt and facile quoting of its words never become a lost art. Perhaps it is not practiced as much as formerly. Our general acquaintance with the Scriptures—as indicated, for example, in the Sunday-school instruction of to-day compared with that of fifty years ago—is improving; but we shall suffer loss, if it call off attention from the old-time memorizing of particular passages. Apart from its connections in the text, a word of Scripture may be in the fullest sense a word of power. How true have we found this to be of many words of Jesus and the apostles. So when the writer of a psalm cries out, "Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I take refuge, until these calamities be overpast," or, "I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplications," there is in his words that which brings us near to God, a quickening and comforting power, whether or not we know the psalmist's name and history, the circumstances in

which he wrote, and the primary or special object of the sacred song.

Choose a Scripture verse as a motto for the day, letting the thoughts revert to it and the heart be uplifted by it, as the need of the day may require. Note the very language of Scripture, and take some pains to fix it in the memory—or, to use our more significant idiom, to know it *by heart*. Earlier than the ninth century of our era, the Hebrew Bible was divided into verses: a similar division of the Greek-Latin New Testament was made by Robert Stephens, mostly on horseback (if the story be true), while making a journey to Geneva, about the middle of the sixteenth century. With but slight alterations these are the verses of our present English Bibles. Their defects and disadvantages have often been pointed out; let me call attention to an excellence—they facilitate the memorizing of texts.

These texts are but fragments, it is true, but they are fragments of gold, broken pieces of the bread of truth, seeds of the Divine life. Happy is the scribe of the kingdom of heaven whose treasury is full of them, both for his personal profit and for the edifying of others in sermon and talk and prayer.

But we must really know the passage, and not content ourselves that it should be fitted to our lips only. The fact that it may be familiar and often quoted does not imply that we understand it, but may even suggest the contrary. It is often the outwardly well known that is inwardly the least known. I can recall more than one illustrative incident. In an informal company of Christian ministers of which I had the pleasure to be a member, the subject of worldly amusements came up in conversation, when a brother replied very earnestly to some-

thing that had been said, "But what does Paul mean when he says, 'If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness'?" "Well," it was asked, "what *does* he mean?" And there was no answer. The words were familiar and easily quotable—partly no doubt on account of their antithetic form—but the attempt to tell their meaning resulted in embarrassing failure. I was once asked by my Greek teacher the meaning of the phrase, "neither shadow of turning" (ἢ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα) in James i. 17 (A.V.). I replied that it probably meant "not the least bit of turning." "Just see," exclaimed the disheartened professor, one of the chief scholars of his time, "how we ascribe nineteenth century slang to the writers of the Bible!" I had been an ordained minister two years, and the lesson of that day sunk very deep.

Now if you will kindly coöperate in the effort, I can give you a far more effective illustration. Choose some book of the Bible—say the Epistle to the Galatians. Note such passages as the following: i. 6, 15 19; ii. 2, 4, 10, 17, 19; iii. 3, 11, 16, 18-20, 24; iv. 3, 12-14, 17, 18, 20, 26; v. 4, 13; vi. 11, 17. Read these passages first in the Authorized Version, and ask yourself what they mean. Then read them in the Revised Version (or, better, the Greek Testament). Lastly, read them with the assistance of some good, critical commentary. The result will be either a sense of encouragement over your present close acquaintance with Scripture texts, or a sense of obligation to examine them more carefully hereafter.

In getting command of a whole class of passages—to be used, for example, in a sermon or other address—there is a certain short cut that can be taken. A con-

cordance or a subject-index may be made to furnish them without any labor of our own. I have no adverse criticism of this method to offer. Save labor wherever you can—that it may be expended elsewhere. Use your index for the good that is in it; but be sure that you are safeguarded against the evil toward which it strongly tends. Gain the right, by independent study, to accept or reject the prescribed passage, according to its true meaning and fitness for your purpose. The blind use of helps will develop more of the parrot than of the preacher. It is said that Alexander Cruden, author of the famous "Complete Concordance"—to which I gladly acknowledge a thirty-six-years' indebtedness—showed no "enlargement of his mind or soul by the special work on the Bible to which he gave himself."

Therefore, we must study the Bible *as a whole*. The method is that of biblical theology. There lies before us not a creed or a compendium of dogmatic theology or any systematic statement of doctrine, but the literature of God's speech concerning himself in times past to the Hebrew forefathers and in Jesus Christ. It dates back to the beginning of national and ecclesiastical history; for with the Exodus and Mount Sinai history begins, and it is at once the history of a nation and of the Church of God. Out of this writing we may formulate our creed and our theology. It extends, sometimes with wide intervals, through a period of fifteen hundred years. It was given "by divers portions and in divers manners." Two of its features cannot fail to arrest attention—namely, *unity* and *progressiveness*. From first to last its subject is the one true and living God and the Christ whom he has sent, and its purpose, that men may lay hold on eternal life in him (John xvii. 3; xx. 31). Of its pro-

gressiveness the Divine names successively spoken may be taken as representative: God, Jehovah, the heavenly Father; and again, the Seed of the woman, the Anointed, Jesus, the Son of man, the Son of God, the Word that was in the beginning with God and that was God.

In our specific study of the "divers portions" of Holy Scripture we need not begin with Genesis. There may be good reason for choosing some other book. Suppose it to be that tender and beautiful letter, the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians. Make it your own. Then you will want to know the other Epistles of this same elect teacher, who received the gospel that he preached not "from man"—nor was he taught it—"but through revelation of Jesus Christ." Some of them have not been preserved (1 Cor. v. 9; 2 Cor. x. 10; Col. iv. 16), but thirteen in all are ours. Each delivers its own message, and is directed toward its own immediate object: all set forth the same great mystery of redemption made manifest in Jesus Christ. They were written at different periods of the apostle's ministry, and form a part of the general progress of doctrine in the New Testament. We may group them as follows: The Historical or Missionary Epistles (First and Second Thessalonians, First and Second Corinthians, Romans, Galatians); the Transition Epistle (Philippians); the Consummation Epistles (Ephesians, Colossians); and the Personal Epistles (Titus, Philemon, First and Second Timothy). Let us now suppose that in the course of time we shall have studied each of these little books as carefully as the one with which we began. Can we estimate the resulting doctrinal and spiritual enlightenment?

But here are eight other Epistles in the New Testa-

ment. These, we find, may be divided into two groups, the Judaic (5) and the Johannine (3), one of which will precede and the other follow the Pauline Epistles. The relation of the remaining books to these is evident enough; and so the outline of the New Testament lies clear and distinct before us.

A teacher, like a physician, must needs propound some plain and searching personal questions. Do not be offended, therefore, if I ask whether you have ever, of your own accord, with head and heart, sparing no pains, read one single book of the Bible? If not, I covet most earnestly the power to persuade you to do this thing. For if you will read one, I believe you will read another and another. Some of them are mere names to you now, but it need not continue to be so. I once asked a class in English exegesis, "What part of the Old Testament is to you the least intelligible and interesting?" The prompt and unanimous answer was, "The Minor Prophets." Accordingly we took up these books for systematic study, and found each of them intelligible, interesting, and brimful of spiritual truth. No book of the Bible, with one or two possible exceptions, need remain vague and of uncertain meaning to the reader. This or that passage, because of an impaired text, or an unknown word, or an obscure reference, or because of the nature of the subject, may be meaningless; but many luminous truths will appear, and the message of the book as a whole will be clear and strong.

In the Revised Version, the marginal readings are noteworthy. They were inserted, under the rules of the Committee of Revision, by a majority vote; and inasmuch as a two-thirds vote was necessary to make any change in the Authorized Version, it is reasonable to

suppose that in many instances they were judged by a majority of the committee to be worthy of a place in the text itself. They are often very suggestive and helpful. I find such examples as the following at almost the first opening of the Book: Isaiah xxviii. 28; xl. 24; 1 Corinthians xiii. 7, 12; xiv. 16, 24, 25, 29, 31; Job *passim*.

As to the use of commentaries, two opposite errors must be avoided: to despise them and to overuse them. There are godly men and women that read their Bibles regularly without note or comment or any such thing—hardly aware even of the marginal references. I have known such a man—a licensed preacher, who had learned to read soon after his conversion, at forty years of age. Some one put a copy of Clarke's Commentary in his hands; but he laid it aside, after a short trial, with the remark that it "rather cast a shade." It is hardly necessary to offer a caution against this extreme; but the case is different with respect to its opposite, the practical substitution of the commentary for the text itself. "Beware," says Professor M. B. Riddle, "of using a commentary in such a way as to hinder study and discourage reflection. Having made several commentaries, and found my pupils too ready to substitute my work for their own, I say this with emphasis." *Too ready to substitute my work for their own!* What teacher's heart has not been pained at the disclosure of some such incidental evil of his life work? Read the book and think it through first without any help. Question it, wonder what may be its meaning, mark its difficulties, read parallel passages and marginal notes, get out of it as much truth and good as possible. You are now prepared for the ministry of the commentator.

Of all the commentaries, the one with which you will be least willing to part is that which you are gradually making, I trust, for yourself—your annotations. The word of explanation, of reference, of suggested fact or truth, written down briefly, with your own hand, unforced and purposeful, will have a meaning and value to *you* that no other note or comment can possess.

Let the Bible be thus individualized into *your* Bible (Rom. xvi. 25). Choose a suitable copy; let it have wide margins; or, better still, let it be interleaved. This may be done by a bookbinder at your order. Then let the Book grow and bear its fruit, exegetically, spiritually, homiletically, in your hands.

Does the magnitude of this work make you shrink back and begin to turn away? You dare not turn away. Avoid the mistake of attempting too much at the start; and think of the days and years that may be given you for the undertaking. Think how the historian will spend his life over one or two short periods of national history, or the scientist over some one of the innumerable classes of natural objects, or the tradesman over the gaining of a few thousand dollars. Think of the delight and the ever-renewed strength of soul that will come to you through communion with Him who is revealed in these Scriptures. Think of the many living truths in countless aspects and forms that will reward your biblical studies, banishing that bane of the pulpit, dullness, and forbidding the suspicion of a dead line, so long as you shall live to declare the works of the Lord. Very significantly was it written as an introductory word to the Psalms, "His leaf also shall not wither"; for he that takes into his daily inner life that law of the Eternal which is celebrated in these Books of Praise,

shall be indeed both a fruitful and an evergreen tree. He shall not see death.

But above all we must remember that the Scriptures are to be read as a *witness to Christ.* Of him they tell; to him they lead; their successive revelations are vibrant with the breath of his Spirit, and are interpreted and fulfilled in him. Do we know them ever more deeply in this Christ-fulfillment? They are not the end, but a means of grace: Christ is the End of the whole law for righteousness to every believer. It is their last word, therefore, "Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen." Do we know his coming into our own life to renew and rule, as Saviour and Lord? To be a man of the Book is to be a man of Christ, learning of him, sharing in his mind, doing his will.

Here is where Israel failed. For centuries they had been what afterwards they were called, "The people of the Book." It was their chief distinction: to them were committed the oracles of God. Nor was the result wholly disappointing. The psalmists were lovers of the Law. In strains the most exalted they celebrated its praises. It was their meditation all the day, their pilgrim-song, more to them than their necessary food. And this love for the Law was an expression of love for the Lawgiver. They received his word as a testimony to himself, and through it they came to him: "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope."

But it was not so with the scribes, the religious teachers of our Lord's day. They, like their predecessors for many generations, had set up the Law as an idol for superstitious reverence, and had fenced it about with a thick and briery hedge of traditions. Their eu-

logies of it were extravagant and sometimes blasphemous. They pored over its contents, counted its words and letters, taught it in their way to the people, but sadly failed to understand its prophecies, to appreciate its ideals, to respond to its spirit and keep its commands. Hence when He to whom the Law would have led the way stood in the midst of them with the words of eternal life, they became the murderers of the Righteous One—idolaters of the Bible, murderers of the Christ: "Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me, and ye will not come to me that ye may have life."

Shall we be followers of the psalmists or of the scribes?

V

On the Earth

To be indifferent to nature is impossible. It would be indifference to ourselves, so closely is the life that is in us related to the all-encompassing life of the natural world. Even Dr. Samuel Johnson, who declared that to him one green field was like all other green fields, and that of all the flowers of the garden his favorite was the cauliflower, was appreciative of such natural products at least as beef and vegetables. Earth is the nourishing mother of us all. "Thou providest them corn, when thou hast so prepared the earth."

But the same provision is made for all animate things. "He causeth grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man." Is nature, then, no more to men than to cattle? The landscape or the bit of sky that is photographed by the morning light on the eye of the pigeon and the dog, does it mean just the same to them as it means upon the retina of our eyes? The difference is immeasurable. It is only as the higher powers—those that are distinctively human—lie dormant within us that we see merely as the animal sees; and these powers cannot wholly sleep. Our tables, it is true, must be spread day by day; and from God through nature comes the supply. But this is only the beginning of benefits, and it is for the sake of what is further provided. For the material creation in which we live and move is adapted no less truly to the needs of the soul than to the demands of the body.

Here is the chosen field of science. We trace the

appearances and events of nature back to that which went before them—their causes—and thus come to understand these multitudinous natural facts as connected together in one vast thought-system. Why do we care to know causes and relations? We are so made that we do care, is a sufficient answer. Knowledge is a good that we instinctively crave. Wonder is as real a human impulse as hunger.

Science brings in its report from afar; and anon it discloses that which, though hidden from ordinary observation, is as near as our own hands or feet or breathing. It shows us a star, Arcturus, that has been traveling in a straight line, at the rate of many thousand miles a minute, ever since astronomers first observed it, and yet to our eyes has not perceptibly changed its position in the heavens, nor would change it so much as the fraction of an inch in a thousand years—such is its distance from our point of observation; and again we are informed that when we look at a violet-colored object, seven hundred trillion light-waves are beating upon our eyes every second—though in order to make a red object visible only about half that number are necessary. We receive these great and unpicturable ideas with which science abounds, that daze the reason and laugh the imagination to scorn, through faith in the men that profess to know. Nevertheless our scientific teachers would have us accept nothing on bare authority, but are ever inviting us to observe and verify for ourselves. Thus the busy intelligence of man has made a start toward the systematic knowledge of outward things.

Nor has the gratifying of intellectual curiosity been the only result. Numberless physical benefits have followed. We are laying hold upon the treasures of food

and healing, of light, magnetism, motion, in the earth, and finding them an incalculably richer heritage than our fathers ever dreamed of. We freeze our ice at will in the heat of summer; we manufacture in the laboratory a substance two hundred and fifty times as sweet as sugar; we lull the threatened nerves to sleep and let the surgeon's knife have its way; we send a letter for five cents to the ends of the earth; we ring a bell that is heard hundreds of miles away, and the friend for whom we call appears. During the past hundred years, which may be described as the scientific century, these already commonplace applications of science to the multiplying of physical comforts and advantages have been many times greater than in the whole previous history of mankind. What story another century of science, and another, may have to tell, no imagination can predict.

Is this, then, the whole of our inheritance? It is only the borders of the goodly land. Nature has a diviner meaning. No; nature has a Divine meaning; and that is its richest treasure and gift. If not, then it has no meaning at all, but is a grotesque dream, a discordant and aimless riddle. But if this were so, science itself would be impossible; for what science does is to interpret a little of the order, the reasonableness, the thought-relations expressed in nature. Who, then, did the original and creative thinking? If nothing less than mind can read the book, nothing less than mind could have produced it—or written even one line of its countless teachings. True, the scientific investigator as such does not concern himself with this inquiry. Keeping within his own particular sphere, he asks only about proximate causes, not about ultimate realities. But the scientific investigator is still a man; and as a man he

cannot be content with a knowledge of the mere uniformities of the natural world, but is constrained to inquire as to the whence and the whither. Thus insensibly he becomes a philosopher; and the one word of philosophy is God. Said an eminent English positivist, on learning that one of his friends, whose faith (or no-faith) he had supposed to be the same as his own, had found in a scientific theory which he had accepted an intimation of personal immortality: "What! John Fiske say that? Well; it only proves, what I have always maintained, that you cannot make the slightest concession to metaphysics without ending in a theology." It is even so. No sooner do we press our inquiries beyond the limits of the world of phenomena, and ask its deeper meaning, the reality of which it is the appearance, than we take the road that leads straight to the Infinite and Eternal God.

But neither is this the whole of our inheritance. There is also a ministry of nature to the higher sensibilities of the soul. Should any one be in doubt of it, let him imagine himself to awake some morning in a world that was made after the model of a huge cavern or a bare dungeon cell. No landscape around him, or far-off spaces and splendor of the heavens overhead. No cloud-forms, or cloud-colors, or glory of the light. No pleasing or changeful outlook in any direction. Plenty to eat; plenty to think about; abundant opportunity for money-making or scientific experimenting; but one flat vapor-roof close above the head, one dull and hueless earth-floor everywhere underfoot, and one heavy, unmusical sound ever droning in the ear. I have heard of an eccentric individual who, priding himself on the possession of extraordinary good sense, undertook to act

strictly on the principle of "nothing for appearance' sake." He declined to paint his house, used a leathern thong instead of a door knob, and so on. Could any one wish the house we all live in were constructed on such a principle?

> God might have made the earth bring forth
> Enough for great and small,
> The oak tree and the cedar tree,
> Without a flower at all.

Suppose, then, that God had made the world flowerless; and not only so, but colorless and skyless, a utilitarian world, with nothing in it whatever "for glory and for beauty." Would it have been an equally suitable life-dwelling for the soul?

Lift your eyelids and see. It needs not to climb a height, or follow a mountain brook, or wander through some gorgeous autumn woodland. Our own dooryard or window may do well enough as a point of vision; and whatever we truly see becomes our own. Thus, no matter how destitute we may be of legal titles, all the world is ours. Poor, are we? Not unless the poverty be within. Not unless we refuse to open our hearts to what is so freely given us of the spiritual wealth of creation.

> Sweet sights and sounds throng manifold.

The correspondent emotions awake in the soul. All the better if it be in some time of convalescence, when the world seems new created, and we say to ourselves, "If it might always seem so, how greatly would it enhance the joy of living." Here is cheerfulness, tenderness, healing of the mind, sublimity, patience, mystery, "central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation." Even the darkening clouds and the terror of the storm are not unwelcome. For these too speak with

a voice to which there is in the soul a voice answering, deep calling unto deep. Like a strain of glorious music, or a great divine poem, the outspread world gives expression to emotions and aspirations which we may often feel but have no power to tell, and thereby makes them deeper and more permanent.

It is the affection awakened by this appeal of the natural world that we call the *love of nature.* All men know something of it. Even William George Ward, the Oxford Tractarian and Tennyson's next neighbor in the Isle of Wight, who "could not distinguish one tree or flower from another," and to whom a bird "was primarily a thing that made a noise and kept him awake," is said to have enjoyed the grand views about his country seat. Some such response the soul must make to nature's patient and pleasing appeal. In the child, with its ever fresh delight in natural scenes and objects, it is no less real, though quite undeveloped, than in Wordsworth, with his heart leaping up at sight of "a rainbow in the sky," and "dancing with the daffodils"; or in Charles Kingsley, of whom "it seemed as if no bird, or beast, or insect, scarcely a drifting cloud in the sky, passed by him unnoticed, unwelcomed"; or in John A. Collins, the eloquent Methodist preacher, who turned to the window on the last morning of his life, that he might "see the glorious sunrise once more"; or in Lord Tennyson, who asked, at noon of the day before he died, that the blinds might be raised for him to see the sky and the light, and repeated, "the sky and the light"; or in many a good woman who is ready to say, as one that I knew sometimes said, "I can see heaven in a flower."

The one word that best expresses the outward appeal together with the inward response, is the word *beauty;*

and the truth that we have now to note is, that in beauty no less than in scientific order may be discerned the Divine meaning. "The fullness of the whole earth is His glory." Is it necessarily seen to be so? Unhappily it is not. We may stop at the sensuous beauty, blind to the Divine. But this is only the old sad story of weakness and failure, of moral nearsightedness, of stumbling over the altar stairs that were builded to lift us heavenward. Said Linnæus, the man of science, concerning a blossom that had unfolded in his presence: "I saw God in his glory passing near me, and bowed my head in worship." Said Lanier, the poet: "I fled in tears from the men's ungodly quarrel about God. I fled to the woods, and laid me down on the earth, . . . and my cheek lay close to a violet. Then my heart took courage, and I said: 'I know that thou art the word of God, dear Violet; and oh, the ladder is not long that to my heaven leads. Measure what space a violet stands above the ground; 'tis no further climbing that my soul and angels have to do than that.'" Mysticism? We may so call it, if the name be deemed appropriate; but it is true moral insight. Indeed, we might easily sustain it with reason and argument; but these would be the same that philosophy has already given us in connection with scientific research, and they need not be repeated. Beauty goes ill with immorality. It befits the noble, the gentle, the good. In a perfect world it must be in some evident way the expression of spiritual excellence. It is a sacrament of holiness—an outer sign of the glory of the Eternal by whose "Spirit the heavens are garnished." Well chanted the prophet: "For how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!"

I know what beauty is, for Thou
  Hast set the world within my heart;
  Of me Thou madest it a part;
I never loved it more than now.

I know the spring with bud and bell,
  The hush in summer woods at night,
  Autumn, when leaves let in more light,
Fantastic winter's lovely spell.

I know the rapture music gives,
  The power that dwells in ordered tones;
  Dream-muffled voice, it loves and moans,
And half alive, comes in and lives.

And beauty's regnant all I know;
  The imperial head, the starry eye,
  The fettered fount of harmony,
That makes the woman radiant go.

But I leave all, thou Man of Woe,
  Put off my shoes and come to thee,
  Most beautiful of all I see,
Most wonderful of all I know.

I lose to find. On white-robed bride
  Fair jewels fairest light afford;
  So, gathered round thy glory, Lord,
All glory else is glorified.

It would have been well if Christian teachers had always read this word of God in his creation. They might have done so; for the Scriptures were given to enlighten their eyes. When Jehovah appeared to Job, it was out of the storm, tumultuous and sublime; and the Voice that spoke sent him to the earth and the sea, the dawn and the darkness, the lightning and the greensward, the "treasures of the snow" and the drops of dew, the wild bird and that superb embodiment of physical life, the battle-horse "swallowing the ground with fierceness and rage," the star-clusters and the wild goats

of the rock—to learn something of the wisdom and power that are beyond knowledge, and be silent before the Almighty Creator. Thus was the tortured old thinker to be saved from his half-crazing perplexity over the problem of suffering. A solution, indeed, that left much unsolved, and showed the need of a fuller revelation—even that of the incarnate Christ; but so far as it went, good and true. To the psalmists the whole visible world, from the silent fish beneath the wave to the song-bird on the topmost spray of the blossoming tree, from deepest depth to highest height, is aglow and astir with the creative Presence—

> Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment, . . .
> Who maketh the winds his messengers. . . .
> He sendeth forth springs into the valleys;
> They run among the mountains; . . .
> By them the fowl of the heaven have their habitation,
> They sing among the branches. . . .
> The earth is full of thy riches.
> Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
> Wherein are creeping things innumerable,
> Both small and great beasts. . . .
> I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live:
> I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.

Above all, the followers of Jesus might have learned that his Father and our Father is the God of nature, clothing the lily in its inimitable beauty, and holding fast the short-lived birds—though men should value them at but half a farthing—in his knowledge and care. Need any one with the Scriptures in his hand have failed to find the way through nature to God?

But there was another and a very different influence at work. The natural world is more intimately connected with us than it could ever be through the mere

medium of the eye or ear or hand. Eye, ear, and hand are themselves a part of nature. It has given of its substance and its forces to the making of the human body. Thus are we ourselves, as to our physical organism, included in the natural order, made of the dust of the earth, nourished by it from moment to moment, swiftly returning to it again. So when Francis of Assisi, with his loving heart and uninstructed mind, speaks of "our brother the sun" and "our sister the moon," and "our brothers and sisters the birds"; or Sidney Lanier, whose mind was not uninstructed, sings to his "cousin Clover" and his "kinsman Cloud"—declaring to such a kinsman, however, plainly enough,

> Fly east or west, be made
> Snow, hail, rain, wind, grass, rose, light, shade,
> What matters it to thee? There is no thee—

we recognize an element of fact that gives reality to the poetic romanticism: in our bodies at least we are close akin to bird and blossom, to wind and cloud. We breathe the same air and see by the same light as the bird; we are swayed by the same forces as the gathering and dissolving cloud.

But these bodies are also the seat of appetites and passions whose tendency is to become lusts and war against the soul. The flesh would control, which is to corrupt and destroy, the spirit. Fearful is the struggle. Hence it is that nature, being the seat and occasion of such enormous evil, came to be regarded as itself an evil thing—a vain show to be despised, an enemy to be overcome, a snare of the devil to be avoided rather than a temple built by God and all ablaze with the Great Builder's glory. There was probably no more widespread error in religious philosophy, East or West. It was the

Gnostic speculation, that the visible world is too impure to have been created by God, and hence must have been the work of an inferior being. The Docetist said that Christ, the Holy One, could not have been incarnated—matter is too gross and evil to embody the Divine; his body, therefore, was an apparition, a phantom body. To contemn the natural life and mortify the flesh by the most austere discipline was supposed, accordingly, to be the path of purification to the soul.

Now these antichristian ideas began to gain ground in the Church even in the time of the apostles. Hence the warnings against them in some of the New Testament Epistles. (Col. ii.; 1 Tim. iv. 1-3; 1 John iv. 2; 2 John vii.)

But these inspired admonitions seem to have been delivered for the most part in vain. After a time the old leaven of asceticism wrought with amazing rapidity in the Christian community. The deserts and mountains of Egypt were populated with anchorites. Through Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Europe the contagion spread and prevailed. And it was the spirit of the monk to despise not only human society, but all natural things; not only the city with its people, but the country also, with the wondrous inarticulate speech that day unto day and night unto night were uttering there: as far as possible, he would rid himself of both. Concerning Antony, the father of Christian monachism, who lived to be over a hundred years old, we are told by his biographer, Athanasius: "His garment was within of hair, without of skin, which he kept till his end. He neither washed his body with water, nor ever cleansed his feet, nor actually endured putting them in water unless it were necessary. And no one ever saw him unclothed till he

was dead, and about to be buried." How could any man rejoice in God's temple of nature while thus misinterpreting and contemning the temple of his own flesh and blood?

But so false a position could not consistently be maintained. Accordingly, when the monasteries were fully organized, a better rule was adopted. In course of time the monks of the West became noted as gardeners and agriculturists: many a league of waste land was redeemed by them for human uses. Some of them, moreover—as, for example, Bernard of Clairvaux and Francis of Assisi—gave evidence of a genuine joy in nature as the handiwork of God.

In the Reformation, the whole monastic system was rejected and condemned. But the spirit in which it originated, both the good and the bad elements—who will say that this may no longer be found in all Christian Churches? Undoubtedly there has been a tendency in modern Christianity to interpret the precept, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," not only as prohibiting what the apostle goes on to enumerate, "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life," but as somehow interdicting the natural joy awakened by anything grand, or pleasing, or beautiful.

An error is not unlikely to be followed by its opposite error. The contempt for nature in religious philosophy was a reaction from the deification of natural forces in the primitive mythologies. But there came, early in the Christian era, a second reaction, in the revival of the nature-worships. This movement was represented, on its philosophic side, by the Neoplatonists, who would not admit that matter is evil, but taught, at least in their

later and degenerate schools, that nature is so interfused with divinity and bears so vital a relationship to the spirit of man, that by the use of physical means there may be produced a state of ecstasy in which will be seen the vision of God. Now, did anything similar to this deification of matter, and these theurgic rites, ever appear in the Church? We tremble with astonishment and pain at the answer that must be given to such a question. From denouncing matter as essentially evil, the leaders of Christian thought began to entertain the idea that, since the Incarnation, there is a Divine potency in material substances that may enter and save the soul. Religion became sacerdotal. To the hands of the priest, to the anointing oil, to the relics of saints—a bone, a garment, a piece of wood—were ascribed a supernatural virtue. The waters of baptism were imagined to possess the power to cleanse the soul from sin. The offering of public worship was gradually degraded into a magic art, in which the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper were solemnly declared to be transformed into the very body, soul, and divinity of the Lord himself. In our own day millions of men and women are bidden to fall down before a bit of consecrated bread and adore it as God.

With a sense of glad relief we come back from these dark and decadent superstitions to simplicity and truth. Nature does not belong to a diabolical order; and neither is it, under any circumstances, a Divine agency. It is the marvelous creation of our God and Father, both revealing and concealing his life-giving presence. Moreover, it is incomparably less than man—the inexpressive background of the human life-picture. We may become so absorbed in the study or contemplation of na-

ture as to lose interest in our fellows, which would be an unchristian overuse of God's good gift. Especially is it not for the minister of the gospel to be known as a botanist, for example, rather than a theologian, or as more of a poet than of a preacher.

In the first half of the last century there lived in our country as enthusiastic a lover of nature, in some of its forms, as the world has ever known—John James Audubon, the genius of the woods, author of "Birds of America." The strength of his days was spent in solitude. Family, friends, civilization were all given up, months at a time, for the pathless prairies and the shades of the forest. He threaded the underbrush, crossed the treacherous bog, slept beneath the trees, or kept awake all night in the canebrake, amid savages, serpents, wild beasts, and fever germs. He lived in imminent peril of his life, as a student of animated nature. Hour after hour, he would watch the ways of the birds, sitting alone in their obscurest haunts, and with the skill of the artist transfer their forms and colors to his canvas. Following the bent of his mind, determined upon success, in all time of toil and danger commending himself to the God whom he devoutly worshiped, Audubon believed that he was living his life according to the Giver's will. Was it a delusion?

During the first twenty-five years of Audubon's career, there might have been seen another indefatigable traveler in the wildernesses of America. A man of infirm health, he endured with unflinching heroism all manner of exposure and fatigue. Cold, hunger, malaria were his frequent companions. The backwoodsman's cabin was his home, though he too sometimes spent the night under the forest trees or the open sky. Nature in

her varied aspects of beauty, wildness, and grandeur was ever before his eyes. But he cared little or nothing for it all. In the "Journal" of his travels and labors for forty-four years, there is hardly a noticeable allusion to natural scenery. He was not a lover of nature; but he was a lover of men. He went into the wilderness, as he went into the city, to find men. He painted no birds, but he was ever calling sinners to repentance. This man was the Apostle of American Methodism, Francis Asbury. Notwithstanding his out-of-door life, it cannot be said that he added a single word to the interpretation of nature, either scientific or poetic; but he sought out the scattered flock of Christ in the wilderness, and gladdened the hearts of a great multitude with the knowledge of the remission of sins. When he died, on one of his incessant tours of preaching and visitation, the societies over which he had been called to preside forty-four years before, had increased in membership from a few hundreds to two hundred thousand.

Here, then, is the preacher's calling. Not research or contemplation, but ministry; on the earth, but *in* and *to* the world. More than that, its sphere is the innermost sphere of human life, amid the things of the spirit. Nevertheless all things are his; and the enlightened use of the natural world will not only bring him nearer to God, but will better furnish him, in spirit and in speech, for his work among men.

VI

In the World

If doubt should arise as to whether even the smallest object in nature is worthy of enthusiastic study, the pertinent inquiry would be, Who made it? If God cares for this oak leaf or this smooth stone of the brook, why should not I? If it is at his touch that the evening cloud brightens into beauty, only inconsiderateness or irreverence will say, It is a thing of naught. For who can affirm that any embodied thought of the Eternal Reason is paltry and vain?

In nature, in the spirit of man, and in the whole world's age-long history, God is One: "For lo, he that *formeth the mountains,* and createth the wind, and *declareth unto man what is his thought,* and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, the Lord, *the God of hosts,* is his name" (Amos iv 13).

But we must not lose the sense of proportion. There is a less and a greater. Above all, must we not lose the sense of distinction between things and persons. If it is true that "sun and moon, Peter and Paul, thou and I, are nothing but words of God," it does by no means follow that all these words are equally significant. So Jesus taught. There is a world of plant life, in every blossom of which he would show us the hand of his Father, the Lord of heaven and earth; but in making comparison between plant and man, his teaching is, "How much more." There is an animal world which occupies the middle ground between the inanimate and the human. Its myriad inhabitants are conscious, though

not self-conscious. We owe them a debt of justice and kindness which they are unable to enforce, and we are often culpably slow to pay. Cruelty to animals is sin against God. Jesus teaches that not a dead or wounded bird falls to the ground without our Father; he takes the shepherd's love for the one sheep that had wandered, and his willingness to risk life itself for his flock, as a tpye of the Divine love. But he also reminds us, "How much, then, is a man of more value than a sheep."

It is not for us to say what manifold purposes nature may serve in God's universal creative idea; but we know that, as one main purpose, it exists for man. It is not his lord or his mother, not his goal or his grave, but his minister. More awful and more glorious than all this realm of outward things is the realm of the soul. The earth "and the fullness thereof" is for the sake of "the world and them that dwell therein": and all is the Lord's, who is the King of glory. Hence the interest of the landscape is not complete without the cottage by the hillside, or the cultivated field, or the team slowly winding along the dusty road. Anything—a tumble-down chimney, a footpath, a name carved on a rock or on the trunk of a tree—that tells of human habitation, as a fact either of the present or the past, or even indicates that the foot of man has passed that way, will give a new and needed charm to the fairest rural scene. Compare the effect upon the observer's imagination of an old orchard with that of an old forest. It is to the patriotic spirit that the physical features of a land are dearest:

> I love *thy* rocks and rills,
> *Thy* woods and templed hills.

It shows a sound and healthy mind, to be interested chiefly not in that which, with all its wonderfulness, is

beneath us, but in our own kind. It shows a *ministerial* spirit. Phillips Brooks is reported to have said that he thanked God for every paving stone that replaced a violet. In a company of friends at a city hotel, when some one spoke of the beauties of nature, he looked out the window at the house roofs and chimney tops, and said: "Oh, no! not nature, but this beautiful view. Give me this, for these chimney tops even stand for life, for humanity, and that is what attracts me, and makes life worth living." Without this spirit of human sympathy and enthusiasm, the great preacher might have become an artist or a scholar, but he could not have been a preacher.

Nature endures: her living types are preserved, amid all vicissitudes and deaths, through the long ages. The oak and the orange, the hawk and the humming bird, the ant and the bee, are perpetuated. The human race also endures, one generation going and another coming. But what a difference is here! As to man, it is the individual, and not simply the generation or the race, that rises into supreme importance. It is not the worth of the race, but the reality and value of the single soul about which the intensest interest gathers. Let us not speak of the "masses." No living beings, not even the least developed plants, can be massed; much less can free and moral personalities. Rocks appear in masses; but human beings, whether noble or abject, in whatever condition of life, are persons, and each at least potentially is a true child of God. Each generation is a generation of souls fleeting across the earthly scene and disappearing in eternity. Now is the day of salvation. Their life here is determining their eternal future. We, whose hearts God may be touching at this moment with a sense

of spiritual reality, are ourselves in the swift procession. The saving truth that we know, shall we not share it with our fellows? the service that may be done, shall we not do it quickly?

If the earth is for man, whatever interest may be taken in the rich fields of research that it offers, scientific, imaginative, or practical, finds its higher inspirations in human service. A Pasteur in his laboratory, a Wordsworth among the lonely hills, a Columbus on the unexplored seas, are servants of humanity. Christian missionaries have made some notable contributions to science. Geography and anthropology are largely indebted to their labors. But their motive has not been the love of science for its own sake; it has been the love of men. When David Livingstone, whose body now rests in Westminster Abbey, as that of the greatest explorer of his age, was urged by Sir Roderick Murchison to quit serving as a missionary and devote his whole attention to geographical discovery, he replied: "I would not consent to go simply as a geographer, but as a missionary, and do geography by the way." "The end of the geographical feat," he declared, "is but the beginning of the missionary enterprise." Livingstone wanted to make a way for the healing of the great "open sore of the world," the African slave trade, and for carrying to the unhappy millions of the Dark Continent the light of Christ. With all his publishing of information to the civilized world concerning the regions of Central Africa, it was the people of the land for whom he lived and labored and died his lonely heroic death.

It would be instructive to trace the sense of Christian brotherhood in some of its historic manifestations. One of its embodiments in the Middle Ages was the order of

knighthood, "whose glory was redressing human wrong." The knight was committed to a life of brave and unselfish service. The Crusades offered him a most welcome opportunity. Reverence for womanhood was greatly promoted through his example. But the defects of chivalry were no less conspicuous than its virtues. It was aristocratic and selective rather than brotherly. The lady of gentle birth was to be protected, in a perilous time, at whatever risk; but the man or woman of humble rank was passed by, if not contemned. There have been far truer knights of the cross than these mail-clad warriors of a romantic age, more human and more Christian. Such were the little army of horsemen that rode into the West, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, under the command of their leaders, Asbury and McKendree, braving the perils of the wilderness, self-devoted to a life of poverty and homelessness, as the people's preachers, to enlighten and save the scattered multitudes in every rude village or settlement, and in every cabin home. Such are the heroic little companies of men and women that are forming now, not in the wild, free country, but in

> the fierce confederate storm
> Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
> Within the walls of cities,

among their wretched tenement houses, in their darkest and filthiest places, to live the Christ-life there and serve the suffering and the degraded poor. Here is the churchly knight, here the fair Christian lady, of the twentieth century.

The Church itself in the Middle Ages, in virtue of what it still knew of the Son of man, was far broader in its philanthropic service than were its armed defenders,

the Christian knights. It recognized no distinction of race or social standing. Its doors stood wide open to everybody, and it would even compel everybody to come in. It checked the lawlessness of the time, and befriended the poor. The humblest child of the soil might be promoted to the highest ecclesiastical dignities. Princes must kneel before the peasant-born priest and confess their sins. Hildebrand, greatest of popes, who did not hesitate to discrown a refractory emperor, was the son of a carpenter. But the Church had become a thoroughly organized spiritual tyranny. It said to men: You shall not think for yourselves, but only believe my dogmas, and obey; contrary belief shall be punished with burning.

Then followed the revolt of reason and conscience in the Protestant Reformation. Men fought for liberty to be themselves. They said: My conscience is my own, not the priest's; my reason is my own, not the Church's; I stand before God, a man in Christ. It was the struggle of individualism against an enforced solidarity. A vigorous growth of Christian thought and manhood was the result. But not the only result: it was inevitable, men being such as they are, not only that sects, or independent church organizations, should multiply (which was not to be deplored), but that they should over-multiply and contend in bitter rivalry, instead of uniting in coöperation (which was most deplorable). No wonder that for more than two centuries little or no missionary work was done by the Protestant Churches. Their energies were absorbed in striving for standing ground and personality: they were thinking not of the unevangelized world, but rather of themselves.

What are the signs of the present time? There is a

movement from liberty to union. Without surrendering aught of their true individuality or independence of thought, men are organizing more widely and thoroughly for the attainment of their ends. It is so in national affairs. A united Italy, "a free and united Germany," are recent achievements. Notwithstanding the oppression and greed, the hatreds and wars, the hosts of uniformed and armed men, that the light of the twentieth century has dawned upon, the sense of interdependence among the peoples of the earth, and even the idea of human brotherhood, are greater than ever in the past. It is notably so in the industrial world, as trades unions and other workingmen's societies testify. What a shame if it were not equally true of the Churches of Jesus Christ. It is true of them. They are drawing closer together. The exaggeration of doctrinal differences is giving way to saner and more Christian views. But especially is it becoming manifest that all denominations of Christians must find in Christ their center of unity and of coöperation for the service of mankind. The Young Men's Christian Association, the Bible Societies, the Evangelical Alliance, the American Sunday-school Union, the International Sunday-school Lessons, the Society of Christian Endeavor, the King's Daughters, the Ecumenical Missionary Conference, the proposals and efforts that are making for the federation of Churches, all are marks of progress toward the realization, both spiritual and practical, of the oneness of Christian believers. And surely in this there is nothing strange or surprising. Face to face on the one hand with the religious uncertainty and unbelief of the age, and on the other with the now accessible millions of heathenism, it is time to make common cause, in the

fullest possible sense, against all common foes. If in the beginning of the gospel it could be said, "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 28), might it not be expected that we in the present age should be able to say, "There can be neither High Church nor Low Church, neither Presbyterian nor Baptist, neither Lutheran nor Wesleyan; but we are all one man in Christ Jesus"? Saul the Jew may become Paul the man. It will not be a watering down of doctrinal beliefs till nothing distinctive is left. Faith will not suffer, but will be perfected. Individuality will assert itself as strongly as ever. Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim: variety will not surrender its rights to unity, nor unity to variety. The Christian people will not be fused into a mass, or gathered into an aggregation, but they will be organized; they will become more and more one great differentiated spiritual body.

Now is all this really a new movement? If it were, it would be self-condemned. For one might as soon expect to discover some new faculty of the human intellect, or some new attribute of the Divine Nature, as to start into activity any new principle or power of social organization. It is in man's very constitution to demand the social ordering of life. One man by himself —what would he be? what could he accomplish? Think of the thousands who, with whatever motive, are serving each of us this moment. Think of the innumerable life-streams that flow into each individual life. We should have to descend lower than the savage tribe in order to get away from the joy and strength of association, the division of labor, the organization of society.

What we who are now "foremost in the files of time" are hoping and laboring for, under the guiding hand of God in the world's history, is the highest attainment of personal liberty together with the strongest, most varied, and most effective social union. "For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another" (Gal. v. 13).

Two thousand years ago the sublime idea of the kingdom of God rose upon the world, clear and radiant, in the teaching of Jesus. Already had it been variously foretold by the prophets. They declared it as they saw it, under the forms of their own times, but incomparably vaster, more spiritual, and more powerful than all that had yet been known in Israel. Messiah was to reign as a king in righteousness; with the breath of his lips he should slay the wicked; oppression and injustice were to cease out of the land; the word of God was to be written in men's hearts, and not merely spoken in their ears or held in their hands; all nations should acknowledge the sovereignty of Messiah, and come to receive the law from Mount Zion. Jesus proclaimed that the kingdom was at hand; that it had already come; that he was the King. Again and again—in no fewer than one hundred and six passages in the Gospels—is it spoken of. But Jesus also put the new wine of the kingdom into new wine-skins—divested the truth of the ancient forms which it had now outgrown. He taught more perfectly than ever prophet had taught the spirituality of the kingdom: and for Mount Zion, behold Mount Calvary; for the secret of the kingdom's power and perpetuity, the law of its life, the message of its prophets, behold the cross and the anointed King crucified thereon. He

taught that the kingdom comes not with observation, but was even then among the people (Luke xvii. 21, 22); that it is to be sought by each man as his highest good Matt. vi. 33); that it is the possession of the poor in spirit (Matt. v. 3); that its law is social service (Matt. xx. 25-28); that it is not to be extended by force of arms (John xviii. 36); that men by their own sinful refusal may exclude themselves from it (Luke xiv. 15-24); that it shall be consummated at the end of the Messianic age (Matt. xiii. 40-43).

What, then, is the kingdom of God? It is the reign of God in the personal and the social life of every obedient soul. Hence it has had a place in the world from the beginning. But when the Son of God appeared in the flesh for the world's redemption, that was so great a fulfillment and manifestation of the kingdom of God that all that had gone before might be reckoned as nothing in comparison. Hence the word of announcement in Jesus' day, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Outwardly it has been represented from that day to the present by the Christian Church, though the Church and the kingdom are not coextensive. On to the end of time it is to be progressively realized. When the will of the Father shall be "done on earth as it is in heaven," then indeed will the great consummation have been reached.

Attempts have been made from time to time—both in England and in New England, for example—to embody the kingdom of God in the forms of civil law, and enforce obedience to its requirements by civil penalties. But the results have always condemned the scheme. Nevertheless this kingdom of heaven is to bring under its control the civil governments of the world, even as it shall

extend its sway over industry, and literature, and education, and art, and home life, and all human interests. But the process must be from within outward, and not the reverse. It is that of salt in food, of leaven in meal. When a Christian ruler sits in the seat of power, or a Christian legislator helps to frame the laws, or a Christian judge renders decisions, to that extent at least a kingdom of this world is becoming the kingdom of heaven. The same is true of the master of industry, the workingman, the writer, the educator, the father or mother in the home: so far as any of them does the will of God, fulfilling his vocation in Christ's name, he is bringing down out of heaven the veritable city of God. Go forth and tell it to the people. Make all men see that it is true, and that they are called to do this same righteous and blessed work. For the kingdom is here and now; and the Christian preacher is the messenger of the Christ-King, to make it known in all the earth.

But he must be prepared for the rejection of his message. Not all men are ready to say "Amen" to the prayer, "Thy kingdom come." Many who say it with their lips deny it in their lives. They are indifferent or antagonistic to the reign of God. Theoretically, as a beautiful and far-away dream—as a kingdom *in* heaven —they will acknowledge it gladly; actually and practically they disregard or oppose it. Giant evils that obstruct its progress are strongly intrenched in men's selfish interests; and the hand that touches these evils excites resentment or scorn.

None stands out so conspicuously in this bad preeminence as the drink curse. Its deathful work is everywhere. It is responsible for nine-tenths of the crime committed in our land. Take up any newspaper and

read of the murders perpetrated under the maddening influence of strong drink. "He had been drinking heavily," "he was drunk," "the two men met in a saloon"—so run the heart-sickening phrases that explain the breaking of a woman's heart, the destruction of a home, the spilling of a fellow-man's blood. The recital has become so familiar as to attract no attention. The temperance appeal falls upon impatient ears. Alas! it is the drinking saloon whose appeals are both common and powerful. In the poorest quarter of the city, where bread is scarce, where the overcrowded tenement makes refinement and modesty impossible, where men are weak and illiterate, an easy prey to their tempters, there stands the saloon to despoil them of what little remains of money and manhood, and to forestall every humanizing and Christian influence in the lives of their children. On the chief streets of the city the same terrible temptation is offered, with all possible sensuous attractions, no less incessantly and obtrusively. It is costly to run the saloon, yet it offers the possibility of large profits; hence the strongest effort is made to enlarge the business—to gratify the appetite of those who have already formed the drink habit, and to entice the young, as yet free and uncorrupted, into exciting the appetite and forming the habit. Enter a Christian home where everything within the power of thoughtfulness and affection has been done for the boys that are growing up; and as their liberty is gradually enlarged, and they go out into the world, mark the subjects of anxiety to those who would give life itself in their behalf. Unspeakable will be the relief, if the father and mother can say, "Of one thing I am sure, that my son will never become addicted to drink." May God pity the fathers and mothers who

give all, hoping for nothing again, and have their hopes turned to desolation by licensed agencies of evil which in this twentieth Christian century should not and need not exist.

When Isaiah delivered his message to the drunkards of Israel—for even priest and prophet had erred in vision and "gone astray through strong drink"—they called it baby talk. They said it was the same thing over and over—"precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little"; he must take them for recently weaned infants, whereas they were men as well as he, they knew their own interests and were competent to manage their own affairs. So they went their way and were "broken, and snared, and taken" (Isa. xxviii. 1-13). Jesus, in sending out his messengers, forewarned them of rejection and even violence at the hands of those to whom they should come with the summons to repentance. "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household." Shall we not, then, have reason to ask whether we be indeed in the divine succession of Christian witnesses, when the Cross as we preach it gives no offense, and all men speak well of us? It was not so, most certainly, with the prophets that were before us.

Must we, therefore, glory in opposition, and fight for the sake of the fighting? No, but cheerfully accept opposition when it cannot be righteously avoided, and fight for the truth's sake, wisely as well as courageously, so as best to secure the victory. Did Christ bid his apostles, "Beware of men"? He also bade them love their enemies and pray for their persecutors. With a heart of boundless good will to men, and therefore of uncom-

promising hostility to the cherished evils that are destroying their happiness, and with the Christian gospel of forgiveness and the new birth as the power of God unto salvation—it is in this spirit and with this word of God that we must enter upon our work and pursue it unto the end. It is God's work, hence the repose of faith; we are God's workers, hence the demand for untiring diligence. "But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. *In the name of Jesus Christ* of Nazareth, walk. And he took him by the right hand, and *raised him up.*"

The kingdom of God in its idea and aim is universal. Geographical or political boundaries are here out of the question. As in its intension it includes all human institutions and interests, so in its extension it embraces the inhabited earth. To speak of it as local or ethnic would be to deny its essential nature and authority, and to talk paganism rather than Christianity. Universal sin, a universal atonement, a universal offer of salvation, a universal reign of Christ—this is the evangel of the New Covenant. Whether we, as bearers of it, shall be employed here or there, in the quiet country or in the surging and sorely vexed city, in America, or China, or India, or in the isles of the sea, is an incidental matter. The world is the Lord's. Much of it is heathen, but all of it is human. Let the King dispose of us as he will. Wherever the foot of man has trod, there is a place for his messengers, because there is a place for his reign.

It is possible to be devoted to a cause, and not proportionately interested in individuals. The philanthropist may be neglectful of his next-door neighbor. Shall we not remember as Christians that if our love for man be genuine and vital, it will be shown in love for men?

Our Bible is not a philosophy of the soul, but a history of souls. From first to last, it takes us among living men and women, into homes, and lives, and hearts. Our Lord was a personal friend. Reading his life, we receive the impression that it was impossible for him to be indifferent to anybody. "And he stretched forth his hand and *touched him*" (Matt. viii. 3). Through eye and ear and touch did Jesus make his way to the leper's loathsome body and suffering soul. Of the young ruler, it is said, "And Jesus looking upon him loved him." Of the little family in Bethany we are told that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Habitually did he speak of himself as the Son of Man. In a Christian creed that in very early times arose in Palestine, and was offered to the Council of Nice for its adoption, there was one clause which might well have been accepted, and perpetuated through the coming ages: "Who lived among men." It is a good thing to have hours of retirement, to get near to nature's heart, to spend much time in secret prayer, to find pleasure in developing the great truths of religion in the pulpit; but as in the Lord's own land it was said of him, so must it be possible to say of his ministers now, "Who lived *among men.*" Not ideal men, not men of romance, but actual blood-and-soul, heart-and-life personalities. Of people as they are the Christian will make his neighborhood, and none of them will be shut out from his interest and sympathy. Preaching to them will not be an end in itself, but a means to an end. It will not be the unfolding of ideas to men in general, but the communication of a truth which is spirit and life, to individuals. It will be a taking of this or that man "*by the hand* and lifting him up." "You love to preach, don't you?" said Dr.

Andrew Bonar—I think it was he—to one of our American clergymen whom he had just heard deliver a sermon with evident ease and enjoyment. "Yes, I do," was the reply. "Do you love the men to whom you preach?" asked Bonar; and the question, so strong in its fatherly simplicity, was not soon forgotten.

The Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury related to a friend, with evident emotion, the following incident:

> The chaplain of a gaol sent to me a young man who was just out of prison for burglary, hoping I might say something to encourage him in his professed desire for a better life. He had seemed incorrigible, having been in gaol twenty-two times. Rather a formidable visitor for a private interview! Some time afterwards the chaplain told me the young man was really reformed, and had related the interview, and added, "But it was this that broke me down—he slapped me on the shoulder and said, 'Jack, we'll make a man of you yet.'"

That was the way of a wise and most eminent social reformer. Wherein should be different the way of the preacher?

VII

The Heart of Courtesy

Politeness is conventional kindness. The difference between mending a broken plaything for a child and offering a seat in some crowded street car to a lady is not that the first act is one of kindness, while the other is destitute of this good quality, but rather that the first is a purely personal act, while the other is required by the prevailing sentiment of the community. Without something of good will toward each other, it would be impossible for people to live together; hence a certain minimum amount of it is demanded by common consent. But the demand for the experience of a feeling cannot be enforced. The best that can be done is to prescribe the forms in which the feeling may be supposed to express itself, and to enforce their observance by the appropriate rewards and penalties. Thus arise the laws of the land, whose underlying principle is justice; and thus also arise the laws of society, etiquette, whose principle is agreeableness. Legislatures command that we commit no trespass; society, that we give pleasure and not pain to our associates.

Etiquette, accordingly, appears and persists among all peoples; and however diverse, or even contrary, its forms, the spirit and purpose are everywhere the same. In India, the master of the house and not the visitor rises, as a sign that it is time for the visitor to go; the Brahmans salute one another by touching the forehead; the low-caste Hindoos salute the Brahmans by bending down till the forehead touches the ground. Among the

ancient Hebrews, it would have been the height of ill manners to appear in distinguished company with the face shaved; among the Egyptians, it would have been equally offensive to appear unshaved. In the tent of the Arab, the difference between the situation of the unprotected traveler before being admitted to a meal, and afterwards, is the difference between imminent peril and perfect security: "Now," says the robber-sheikh, after the sacred rites of hospitality have been observed, "there is bread and salt between us; and I will defend you to the last drop of my blood." In the East, the shoes must be removed before entering a house of worship; in the West, the hat. In the East, the grief of bereavement is expressed, with the aid of hired mourners, in wails and loud lamentation; in the West, it must be controlled and subdued. The Chinaman wears white as a mourning color; the American, black. But the motive of all these variant rules of behavior is the same—to refine and humanize the daily life. They differ, like different languages, merely as modes of expression for the same or similar states of mind.

Least of all men is the Christian preacher at liberty to despise the proprieties of social intercourse. Who else is brought so near, as a friend and helper, to so many people, young and old, of all classes? And these proprieties of speech and manner are means of fellowship and of influence; whereas the lack of them can only hinder his power for good.

There is, indeed, in all forms a tendency toward unmeaning and fantastic excess. Not content with using them as means, we would serve and exalt them, insensibly perhaps, as ends. Instead of considering what they are good for, we are prone, though not professedly, to

set them up on their own account, as if somehow they were good in themselves, and the more of them the better. It has been so, first with the Jew and then with the Gentile, in religion; and thus has fallen upon the Church of God the blight of rabbinism and of ritualism. It is so in the matter of costume; hence the ever-changing fashions. Should we be surprised, then, to find it so in etiquette? There may be an excess of politeness. The ultra-fashionable or the over-punctilious, fearful lest they shall miss the newest mode in dress and behavior, are not the examples of good form that we need care to follow. True politeness is observant of correct usage, but it is not a thing of fops and dilettanteism. Certainly there is no reason why two friends should come away thirsty from a spring, each persistently refusing to drink before the other.

When our Lord sent forth the Seventy, he bade them, "Salute no man by the way." The salutations "by the way" were a good example of unmeaning excess of politeness. The form had overgrown into idle and repetitious formalities, which a man to whom time was precious, intent upon the accomplishment of a serious purpose, would do well to omit. But the Lord's messengers were not to suppose themselves freed from the observance of all ancient and conventional forms. On entering the homes of the people, for example, they must offer the customary greeting: "Into whatsoever house ye shall enter, first say, Peace to this house" (Luke x. 4, 5; Matt. x. 12).

It is the reasonable and accepted canons of good breeding, which all represent a *principle* of conduct, that the right-minded man will be glad to observe. He will no more question or reject them than he would question

the common law of the land. It is here that manners become morals, pleasing behavior a duty. May I venture, by way of illustration, to note a few palpable violations of this law of love, such as the following?—

To read or write, without permission, in a social company, or in the classroom during a lecture.

To wear soiled linen, grease-spotted garments, or unblacked shoes—forgetting that though our clothes may be threadbare, they, like the person, should be kept scrupulously clean.

To pare or clean the nails in company, or—which is the worse?—not to keep them clean; to make a display of the toothpick, or to talk with it in the mouth; to suck the teeth—to let them go unbrushed.

To offend the sensibilities of persons of delicate nerves—in the sick room, for example—with the odor of tobacco from the breath or the clothing—forgetting that the tobacco user is himself unconscious of that with which he so often acquaints his friends, namely, his own malodorous condition.

To gulp down one's food—feeding, like an animal, instead of eating, like a man.

To wipe one's face with the table napkin; to rest the elbows on the table.

To sit in the parlor with the chair tilted back and one knee exalted to a level with the breast.

To leave a home in which one has been entertained, without expressing thanks or pleasure to the hostess.

To talk, or attempt it, with the mouth full of food.

To spit upon the floor, one's own or any other; to spit upon the sidewalk; to spit in any one's presence, unless it be unavoidable—as if a gentleman may be less refined in this, or anything else, than a lady.

To grasp the hand of a friend with the grip of a vise; not to grasp it at all, offering one's own as a lump of inanimate flesh.

To sit dumb and heavy in company, or with a vacant stare, as if one were not obliged to make his contribution to the pleasure and entertainment of others.

To monopolize the conversation—forgetting that conversation is interchange of sentiment, *con*-versation, not declamation or monology; that the good converser is a sympathetic listener, interested in something more than in hearing himself talk; and that the other person might have a word or two to say—could he get the chance—that was not utterly unworthy of attention. (Coleridge to Charles Lamb: "Did you ever hear me preach?" Lamb: "I never heard you do anything else.")

To make an effort to shine, either as a wise man or a wit; to rehearse the story of one's own merits, accomplishments, and achievements, or those of one's children or other relatives—applauding one's own music, like Blind Tom, only with a different motive—heedless of the good counsel:

> If you your ears
> Would save from jeers,
> These things keep meekly hid:
> Myself and I,
> And mine and my,
> And how I do and did.

To be pugnacious and obstinate, self-opinionated, wiser in one's own eyes than "seven men that can render a reason."

To show bad temper; to wound the sensibilities of others with cold or cutting remarks.

To seek one's own comfort and gratify one's own tastes, at the expense or to the neglect of others.

To have two sets of manners, one for home and the other for company—in which case neither can be true and good.

To live in a fever of haste, such as may be said to be widely characteristic of Americans, inducing disease of the nerves (*Americanitis*), and making the charm of good manners impossible.

To repeat to anybody, anywhere, or in any circumstances, a vulgar anecdote, whatever wit or humor it may be supposed to convey—as if it were possible for a clean imagination to express itself through filthy lips.

Obey the laws of good behavior, and you will be rewarded. Your company will be welcomed and sought for. Many a door of opportunity will open at your approach. People will treat you with something of the same deference and kindness that mark your deportment toward them: "with what measure ye meet it shall be measured unto you." On the other hand, break the laws of social intercourse, and the penalty is inevitable. Without judge, jury, or formal trial, a ban of excommunication will be pronounced. Should official position admit you still into the society of refined persons, your ill manners will be a grief to them, and will at best be charitably apologized for and tolerated. They will cost you completeness of respect, and will shut many a door of opportunity in your face.

Nevertheless we shall not find the motive of genuine courtesy here. The man who obeys the laws of the land that he may avoid fines and keep out of the state prison, is not a true-hearted citizen; and similarly the man who obeys the laws of society that he may avoid its disfavor and gain its prizes, is not a true-hearted gentleman.

There must be a spirit of unselfishness, humanity, good will, the *heart* of courtesy.

Such a spirit will quicken all observance of established usage with a grace and a sympathetic power not otherwise attainable. But it cannot be successfully feigned, and without it even the tongues of angels would be unmusical. Moreover, it will find expression in unceasing original ways. Prescribed forms will constitute but a small part of its means and materials. It will incite a thousand obliging acts and kind attentions for which no precept has ever been given and to which no rule or measure can be applied. Love is a law unto itself, and speaks its own universal language. Probably our manuals of etiquette offer no instructions, for example, as to how we should treat the request of a stranger to be shown the way to some place that he is trying to find; but we all know how kindly, and again how unkindly, a request of this sort is often responded to. This good spirit is shown by the laborer at the grave when he lays the first shovelfuls of earth softly upon the coffin case; and it is not apparent in the officiating minister at the funeral, when he indulges in remarks that lacerate the hearts of the bereaved—sorry triumph of eloquence!—instead of soothing and healing them. It is the spirit that would not let godly George Herbert in his parish of Bemerton spend a day without showing mercy, and that made Dean Stanley such a man that it could be said of him, at a commemoration meeting, by James Russell Lowell, "I think no man ever lived who was so pleasant to so many people." Do we ask when and where it may be shown? All possible human intercourse is its sphere. "If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?"

What is civilization? The word belongs to the class of indefinables; but the meaning of it has been given by the late Lord Chief Justice of England, Baron Russell, as follows:

> Its true signs are thought for the poor and suffering, chivalrous regard and respect for woman, the frank recognition of human brotherhood, irrespective of race or color or nation or religion, the narrowing of the domain of mere force as a governing factor in the world, the love of ordered freedom, abhorrence of what is mean and cruel and vile, ceaseless devotion to the claims of justice. Civilization in that, its true, its highest sense, must make for peace.

What is gentlemanliness? Another question that cannot be answered with a logical definition; but we may accept the following description of a gentleman as correctly representing the idea:

> One who does not willfully give cause of offense to any, does not seek to overreach his neighbor, does not forget the respect due to womanhood or old age, the feeble or the poor; one whose aims are generous, whose trust is constant, whose word is never broken, whose conscience is never stained, who is as gentle as brave, and as honest as wise, who wrongs no one by word or deed, and dignifies and embellishes life by nobility of thought, depth of feeling, and grace of manner.

Now I have put these attempted definitions side by side, that it may be seen that the two are essentially one. A gentleman, a man of courtesy, is a citizen, a civilized man. But further, we can hardly refrain from asking, Could such definitions be given in an unchristianized community? They never have been. National and social life, as we understand it and aspire to realize it, is at heart Christian. Its principle, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"; its rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even do ye also unto

them"; its deepest explanation, "The fruit of the Spirit is . . . kindness."

Courtesy includes justice, but goes far beyond. When Samuel, the Jewish Aristides, was old and grayheaded, at the close of his long administration as judge of Israel, he challenged any man, in the presence of the assembled people, to show the slightest unfairness in his official conduct: "Here I am: witness against me before the Lord and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand." (1 Sam. xii. 3, 4.) There was honesty, integrity, justice—a very sublimity of the soul.

When Paul, the chief pastor of the Christian churches, was charged in the church of Corinth, which he had founded, with being a false apostle, crafty and selfish, he was forced to cry out, for the gospel's sake and not for his own, in self-vindication: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is made to stumble, and I burn not? . . . I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. . . . But all things, beloved, are for your edifying. . . . For we rejoice when we are weak and ye are strong; this we also pray for, even your perfecting." (2 Cor. xi.-xiii.) Was this the spirit of justice? So much more than justice that to call it by that name would be a misleading understatement. Here was sympathy, the joy of self-sacrifice, Christly love.

Here also is the origin of our present-day idea of gentlemanliness and courtesy. Not in the history or literature of the gifted Greeks, not in the life of any

judge or prophet of the Old Testament; but in the New Testament—in the life of a Christian and apostle, which he lived *in Christ.* "Ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." Would you get the impression of a still completer picture of the New Testament gentleman? Study that best of all miniature manuals of politeness, the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. The man who will not simply "take an occasional journey into that chapter," but will "live there"—as Mr. Moody testified that his friend Henry Drummond did—"appropriating its blessings, and exemplifying its teachings," will insensibly acquire the grace of perfect manners. He will be ever learning the truth and tenderness, the strength and gentleness, of Jesus. For, what was the manner of that perfect Life? "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth."

No limit can be set to the practice of courtesy, unless there be a limit to the love of our neightbor. Their are persons who seem to think that truthfulness will sometimes impose a limit, and that in such a case truthfulness may be laid aside; in other words, that one must lie, on occasion, for politeness' sake. I trust that we have not so learned Christ. The fancied collision between truth and love is unreal. Think what is the purpose of them both. Why must I speak the truth? Because human companionship and society would be impossible without it. Why must I love my fellow-man? For the same reason. Confidence and kindness are the indispensable moral ties that bind us together: one cannot be sundered in the interest of the other.

What is your opinion of such sentiments as the following?—

One is bound to listen with the appearance of interest even

to the most inveterate proser who fastens upon us in society; to smile at a twice-told tale; and in short, to make such minor sacrifices of sincerity as good manners and good feeling demand. . . .

The skillful do not think it incumbent on them to tell stories just as they hear them. Modifications that will render them more effective they do not hesitate to make.

I once heard a lecturer relate, with strong commendation, this incident, to an audience of young men. An uncultivated man, dining at a fashionable table, took up his finger bowl, having squeezed in it the juice of the accompanying bit of lemon, and began to drink the water. Quick as thought the hostess did the same, and signified to her husband that he should follow her example. Thus the guest was led to believe that he had acted in the manner expected of him, and to have no suspicion of anything wrong, unless it were that the lemonade was very poor.

I should feel compelled to say that all such justifying of well-meant falsehood, spoken or acted, is itself unjustifiable. "Love . . . rejoiceth with the truth." There is, indeed, a time to be silent, and a time to do nothing, rather than cause humiliation and pain. There are innocent expedients that will occur to the quick-witted for preventing or relieving embarrassment. But when I am informed that you hold yourself bound to make a sacrifice of sincerity, and purposely deceive me, for my own pleasure or good, I will ask that you at once loose your bonds and go free. Let me suffer the consequences of my own ignorance or awkwardness—it may prove to be a needful lesson—rather than be made the victim of even a "minor" deception. Love itself cannot prevent all suffering—far from it; courtesy cannot always save the feelings of a blunderer, and when the at-

tempt is made to do so at the expense of veracity, something worse than a blunder is perpetrated. How am I to know when you will feel at liberty or under obligation to tell me or act me a falsehood? and how, then, am I to believe you at all? Let us not sit at the feet of "Mr. Sludge, the Medium," who practiced deception to make people good and happy in the faith of a future life—

> As for religion—why, I served it, sir!
> I'll stick to that! With my *phenomena*
> I laid the atheist sprawling on his back—

or look to the sixteenth century, when the scholarly Erasmus said that a falsehood is sometimes preferable to the truth, or to the fourth century, when even the devout Chrysostom could justify a deliberate deception that he had practiced for the good of the Church, on the ground that "great is the value of deceit, provided that it be not introduced with a mischievous intention"; let us go further back, even to the New Testament, and learn our ethics there: "Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye the truth each one with his neighbor; for we are members one of another" (Eph. iv. 25). The Golden Rule demands that we shall receive from one another truth, no less than justice or love. A gentleman is a man; and there is no manhood, no clear and strong personality, without truth.

Now if the fine art of courtesy is an expression of the best that is in the best of men, truly learned in the school of Christ, how can the disciple of Christ ever ask, Is it worth while? Nevertheless it does seem to be regarded by some Christian men as hardly worthy of attention. To make light of it is even deemed, apparently, a sign of mental greatness or of moral earnestness.

An overfree and uncivil manner is supposed to form a suitable background for the setting forth of superior qualities of head and heart.

Was John Wesley, then, less of a man for being a gentle man? Would he have shown more admirable qualities of head and heart by repelling his opponents as violently as, for the most part, he was assailed by them—returning abuse for abuse, and scurrility for scurrility? It was a weakness in him—was it?—to be always neat in personal appearance, to make himself a welcome guest alike in mansion and cottage, to show not only fidelity and benevolence but courtesy also to everybody?

A minister of the gospel, occupying a prominent position in the Church, is a guest at your table. He draws the roast beef to his own plate and cuts off a few slices. He reaches across the table for a piece of bread. He informs the hostess, on taking his seat at dinner, that he takes coffee for dinner, and wishes a cup of it at this time. On all subjects that arise in conversation, he pronounces offhand judgments with the most offensive self-assertion, as who should say, "I affirm that it is so, therefore it is so: behold an end of controversy." Would host and hostess desire their children to grow up like him? Wherein does any man appear to better advantage by being ungentle? "Independent"—do we say? The *independent* man should live alone.

Thomas Carlyle was unquestionably a literary and intellectual genius of the first order: would it have dimmed the luster of his name, if he had shown somewhat of that "singular graciousness toward all sorts and conditions of men" that beautified the life of his eminent contemporary, William Ewart Gladstone? Did Martin Lu-

ther's rudeness or his occasional coarseness add anything to the grandeur of his character? We make excuse for it, remembering his parentage and the violence of the times; but to excuse is not to approve or admire. No; it is the vainest of vagaries, that a rude manner will serve as a background to heighten the effect of nobility of mind and character. The figure is delusive: the bad manners are not a background, but a blot.

It is also worth while that we should remember, as preachers, that the habit of courtesy in daily life will appear as sympathy and gentleness in the pulpit. Certain speakers, indeed, show the unhappy faculty of putting off their best self on appearing before an audience. I have heard a lecturer, speaking on this very topic of courtesy and some related topics, after having referred more than once to his own example, make the assertion, and repeat it with emphasis, "If any one thinks I am referring to myself through vanity, he is a *fool*." Let us be charitable: it was not the speaker's truest self that spoke; he was a genial gentleman. But it is our truest self that ought to speak in the pulpit; and the general principle is, that as the man lives so the preacher preaches. The deference, the considerateness, the self-control, the forgetfulness of one's own appearance or pleasure, the desire to serve, that have become a part of the unconscious self in social intercourse—

> And manhood fused with female grace
> In such a sort the child would twine
> A trustful hand, unmasked, in thine,
> And find his comfort in thy face—

will be called for, and will instinctively answer the call, in the larger intercourse of the public audience. It is worth while that they should.

VIII

The Outer Self

As we have already been reminded, our bodies are one with external nature. There is no grain of matter in them that does not come from surrounding substances, and is not in the way of returning thither. There is no force controlling them—gravitation, light, heat, chemical affinity—but is shared by them with the clod, the tree, the distant star, the beast of the field. They are wholly in the terrestrial order—of the earth and the air—and have no peculiar or permanent possessions. "All flesh is grass."

But what purpose does the human body serve in the economy of nature? It serves a purpose above the economy of nature. It has been so made, in limb, in sense-organ, and above all in brain and nervous system—the finest form to which matter has attained—as to be a fit organism for the human soul. The soul in its substance and its forces is not one with nature. It belongs to another order, not physical but moral. In the literal sense of the word, it is supernatural. Between matter with its moving atoms, and mind with its consciousness, there is a difference than which no greater can be conceived. Nevertheless the two are so related in the brain that material things are ever making themselves known to the mind, and the mind is ever changing their places and forms and using them in ten thousand ways for its own ends.

So strong and indubitable a fact is self-consciousness that we are more distinctly aware of our personal sepa-

rateness from nature than of our bodily fellowship with it. Let us be told that we are other than the things we touch and see, that even our brains are not ourselves, and instantly we assent as a matter of course to the familiar truth. Without waiting for explanation or argument, we believe

> this main-miracle, that *I* am *I*
> With power on my own act and on the world.

But the fact of our bodily affinity with the material universe is perhaps not so heartily acknowledged. Yet the clearer our realization of the whole truth, the better for the conduct of life. Certainly the thought of the laws of nature, universal and inexorable, in our bodies, will dispose us to live the true natural life. Shall it not turn us away from all superficiality and self-indulgence, in reverent obedience to God and in tender sympathy toward all kinds of creatures?

We shall never reach too high an appreciation of the body. The ascetic—who is seldom seen at the present time—and the sensualist—who unhappily is seen every day—maltreat and despise it. The Christian may be inclined through ignorance or thoughtlessness to depreciate it. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God," says Paul to the Romans, "to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." But this exhortation, taken in its natural sense, seems to us too narrow for an apostle's pen; and accordingly we take it to mean "the body as representing the whole man." Is it narrow? Let any one really receive it, and then tell how much it contains. *Give God your bodies,* says the Apostle, first of all. Then he goes on to bid us consecrate the inner self also to the Divine service: "And be not

fashioned according to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your *mind.*" In like manner, where the same inspired teacher, in his first letter to the Corinthians, closed a description of the sacred dignity of the Christian's body, such as had never before been written, with the weighty and thrilling appeal, "Glorify God therefore in your body," it would seem that some Christian scribe attempted to improve the Scripture by adding "and in your spirit, which are God's." But Paul's word is more forceful: "Glorify God therefore *in your body.*"

Still again, where Paul wrote the great prophetic word, "Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation," we have been misreading, for many years, "Who shall change our *vile* body." As Archbishop Whately on his deathbed said to his chaplain, who had quoted this phrase as Scripture teaching, "It does not say that." Compared with the glory that is to be revealed, these present forms of flesh are poor and humble indeed, but there is no Pauline or other Scripture authority for calling them *vile.* On the contrary, it is on such authority that we may speak of them as "members of Christ."

The body, or outer self, mediating between the soul, or conscious self, and the surrounding world of nature and of men, conveys *impressions* from without inward.

What could be finer or more wonderful, in this way, than the service of the senses? True, they do not show us what material things are in themselves. That will perhaps ever remain an unwhispered secret. But they do make report of the qualities of things, as these are represented in the sensations excited in ourselves. It is but a superficial knowledge, no doubt. In the philosopher's mind, it will raise more questions than it lays to

rest. Nevertheless it is sufficient unto the day of our earthly life; and the image-world that it discloses is illimitable and glorious.

In taking account of the senses, we may pass from taste, which is the most *sensuous*—ministering least unto the higher powers, and requiring constant regulation that it may not impair or corrupt them; smell, which is the most *delicate;* touch, which is the most *versatile;* hearing, which is the most *penetrating and soulful,*—to sight, in which the sensational element has fallen nearly to zero, and perception, *knowledge,* seems to be all. To see and to know have come to be used as almost convertible terms. Intuition is a *looking upon;* a prophet is a seer. To lose this one sense would bring greater impoverishment than would the loss of all the rest. When Milton, in his blindness, lamented that "wisdom at one entrance" was "quite shut out," it was the fact that through that one entrance more knowledge enters the mind than through all the other windows of sense, that made his deprivation so great.

How it is that the material world thus, through the eye, opens up to the percipient soul, what it is that we do when we see—ask the infant of days, who can tell as much about it as anybody. But to think upon the mystery of it, to wonder at it, to get some real impression of its wonderfulness, may subdue the soul into speechless awe, and enkindle faith and hope toward the God of our nature.

Very finely wrought, also, is the organ of vision. When we think of the delicacy of the texture and adjustment of its component parts, and its necessary openness to the perils of the outside world, unlike the heart and the brain, safe in their inner citadels of bone, it may seem

strange that the loss of sight, instead of being a rare calamity, is not an everyday occurrence. Even in our modern life, with its much reading and writing and its night work, the eyes respond with the utmost fidelity to the hard requirements that are laid upon them. All the greater must be the pity and the shame, if, through any fault of ours—such, for example, as reading in a dim light, or while lying down, or with the light, especially if it be artificial, falling upon the eyes themselves rather than upon the book—they should be irremediably injured. As, therefore, the sense that we are chiefly to control is *taste,* so the sense that we are chiefly to protect and care for is *sight.*

Not only through the five senses does the world without affect the soul, but also through the bodily temperament and health. Two facts may here be noted. The first is, that the soul will be affected, whether with or without its consent, by these physical conditions. Pure, rich blood in free circulation makes for buoyancy and hopefulness; hence the *sanguine* temperament. A sluggish liver tends to produce *melancholy.* If the nerves are easily susceptible to intense excitement, the man is *choleric;* if they be of just the opposite quality, he is *phlegmatic.*

It is a familiar fact, that if the brain be injured—as, for example, by a blood-clot—some power of the mind, or perhaps all its powers, are disabled. But it is a more familiar fact, and one of much more practical interest, that to oppress the brain in certain other ways, less tragic but no less real—such as overeating—will produce a similar absence or confusion of ideas.

Religious gloom may often be traced to its origin in the stomach or the liver. But the advice that is so

briskly offered, to "take a blue pill," must be received with somewhat more of wisdom than usually prompts its utterance. The pill may serve in an emergency, but if too much depended on will prove to be a cause rather than a cure. The true remedy is harder to take: it is, to live according to the laws of God in the body. Fail to observe these laws, whether through a mistaken self-devotion, as Brainerd, Asbury, and Frederick Robertson seem to have done, or through self-indulgence, as most men—shall we say, most Christian men, and most preachers?—are prone to do; and the result must be that body and mind will suffer together. To take drugs and continue to live in violation of nature's laws is hopeless folly. A man who should fall over a precipice every day could not hope to have soundness of body by merely binding up his bruises. No ointment will meet the case; he must pay more heed to the law of gravitation.

The other noteworthy fact is the power of the mind over the body. To say that what we are physically determines what we shall be mentally, is to give as truly one-sided an account of our nature as to say that what we are mentally determines what we shall be physically. The man whose genial manner has no deeper source than his animal spirits—who is companionable enough when perfectly well, but cross and unhappy when out of health—is rightly regarded as a weak and unformed character. It is not true that good blood and nerves *must* make their possessor cheerful, and that an excess of bile *must* cause despondency. To be bilious is not to be atrabilious. Let two persons be exposed to malaria: one falls sick of fever, the other, breathing and drinking the same disease germs, maintains the enjoyment of perfect health. The difference is in the different power of

physical resistance in the two cases. In like manner, let two persons have exactly the same kind of bodies, both as to temperament and health, and while one becomes an intellectual weakling or a moral wreck, the other may develop the highest nobility of thought and character. The difference is in the souls. The one consented to yield and sink down into fleshliness; the other wills to exert that power of self-government of which it is capable.

Not only may we refuse to be irritable according to the suggestions of diseased secretions or nerves, but we may help mentally, with much effectiveness, to heal the disease itself. No doubt the wise physician will try to reach the mind through the body, but he is also constantly trying to reach the body through the mind. For very well does he know that hopefulness, for example, makes for health and healing, while, if the heart within be dead, the outer self will fight a losing battle.

We may reasonably guess that the wild outbursts of passion and the gathering clouds of insanity that made the life of King Saul, in its later years, so miserable, were partly caused by bad physical conditions; and that a lithe, well-knit body, glowing with health and vitality, was favorable to the extraordinary mental energy of the young hero in his court whose glory was soon to eclipse his own. But let us turn to a greater than either Saul or David—to the Apostle of the Gentiles. Paul was beset with infirmities. Not only was there cold and hunger and scourging and stoning and shipwreck enough, it would seem, to shatter nerves of iron; but there was one "thorn" that stung and fretted the flesh continually, and could not be removed. Did Paul give way to it? On the contrary, he found it an occasion of increasing

spiritual power. "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me." So was it with this man of the "weak bodily presence" even to the end of life, when, with a shout of triumph, he declared that he was being poured out, body and soul, as a drink-offering to the Lord that had redeemed him. The body is for the soul, not the soul for the body. "The heavens do rule."

We are told that Plotinus, the mystic, blushed to feel that he possessed a body. It was a feeling of shame which itself ought to have made him heartily ashamed and repentant. But the blush of shame would not be uncalled for on our faces, when we speak or act as if *possessed by* our bodies.

It is through the body, also, that the soul makes *expression* of itself to others.

Is there any more direct way in which this may be done?

> Star to star vibrates light: may soul to soul
> Strike through a finer element of her own?

A thoughtful mind will be slow to deny it; but certainly we are not conscious of exerting any such power. We are in the flesh and in the world of nature, and it is through the flesh and the forces of nature that we act upon our fellows. Our ideas we express chiefly through speech; our purposes, through conscious acts; our feelings, through looks and tones and unconscious action. The bodily presence of my friend is the sign that he exists, and is here. Something of himself he makes known. True, it is very little;

> For what you see is but the smallest part
> And least proportion of humanity.

Any man's self-expression is restricted and meager; and

for two reasons: first, because of the greatness of the soul, whose depths are abysmal and fathomless; and secondly, because of the manifold imperfections in the media of expression. Now to make these as fitting and perfect as possible is every man's duty. Is it not the very obvious duty of the Christian preacher?

Note the unconscious bodily expression. The soul shows through the flesh, either glooming or shining. We speak of "expressive" countenances, but every countenance is expressive of something. The eye is a window through which the soul looks out not only to see others, but also to be seen by others. Our faces tell what we are. Pride, sensuality, suspicion, deceitfulness, and their opposites, all are visible traits—yours, mine—and are daily becoming more visible. Paul said, "I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus." Did he refer to the bodily effects of the stoning, the eight public whippings, the night and day "in the deep," that he had suffered in his Master's service? Probably; but we need not doubt that Paul bore other bodily brands of the Lord Jesus—that, all unconsciously to himself, he *looked like* a man of Christ. So does every one of us bear either these or the marks of some other master to whom we are yielding our life's devotion. What was said of Thomas à Kempis, that his face, as he sung in the choir, "shone with a holy radiance which filled the spectators with awe," may or may not be true; but it is certainly true that the inner light of sincerity, love, and happiness may illumine any even the plainest features.

> Her face was pinched and pale and thin,
> But splendor struck it from within.

Some forms and faces, indeed, are by nature better fitted than others for expressing the spiritual life. In

many instances, also, the very finest natural face is never remade into such an instrument of expression. Because of the poverty or selfishness of the spirit, the face fails of its true idea and shows forth the earthly or the sinful only. On the other hand, we may meet with

> some strong,
> Rare spirit, fettered to a stubborn body,
> Endeavoring to subdue it and inform it
> With its own splendor.

But such endeavor need not be in vain. No "body" is so "stubborn" as not to yield more or less completely, and with increasing plasticity, to the strong informing soul.

One great characteristic of the public speaker, as compared with men of other callings, is, that his sole instrument is the body. The farmer would be helpless without his horses and his plow. The machinist lays hold upon the mechanical powers. The writer utilizes the pen and the printing press. Even the singer may have his accompaniment on the piano or the organ. But the speaker has only his body. It is clear, therefore, that he should spare no pains to make it a fine and effective instrument.

The chief desideratum is health. This depends partly upon heredity, partly upon unavoidable circumstances, but in ordinary cases almost entirely upon our own wisdom and will. Are we living naturally—not necessarily in a way that is natural to us, but in a way that is "natural to nature"? We complain of the tailor for his misfits, or of the cook who, after kneading and baking for twenty years, still fails with her bread. Passing through the shoe department of a state prison, I remarked to the superintendent that each operative had a

very simple part to perform—perhaps only to cut out heel-taps or to polish the heels of shoes. "Yes," was the reply, "and even then some of them don't learn to do it well." We stand amazed at such incompetency. But how is it with ourselves in the practice of certain extremely simple arts, at which we have been trying our hand from infancy, in the conduct of life? Let us take a glance at some of them.

Have we learned to *eat?* Gladstone said of Carlyle: "He tumbled his food into his stomach. It was like posting letters. He did not seem to use his jaws except to talk." No wonder he was so miserably dyspeptic, and with all his genius inclined to substitute growling for thinking. The man that has not time to eat slow has not time to eat at all. Better miss the meal—a miss that would sometimes prove to be in itself a gain—than swallow it without mastication. There have been given us not only teeth to grind our food, but also salivary glands to saturate it, preparatory to digestion. Hence the witty hygienic advice to "chew milk." The stomach, being an involuntary organ, does its work thoroughly; the teeth, working voluntarily, are hasty and negligent. What does this seem to prove as to the faithfulness of the will?

An indirect advantage of eating slowly is that it will check the tendency to overeating. The right-minded man, indeed, can hardly become what is commonly known as a glutton. But he is not unlikely to indulge in excessive—which, interpreted by its effects, is hurtful—food, regularly, from meal to meal. Half his time, perhaps, the bodily energy—most of all, the energy of the brain—is overtaxed by the process of digestion. Certainly this cannot be called right-minded—to stum-

ble in the human work of thinking, from being overweighted with the animal activity of digesting. The preacher, for example, who does not soon learn that he must eat with moderation before delivering his sermon, is surely slow of heart to receive the teaching of experience. But how about the preparation of the sermon? Does that demand less brain work, or more, than the delivery of it? If he be honest with himself, therefore, he will soon find out when he is losing precious time in his study, unable to grasp his theme, to concentrate his mind, to gain a clear vision of dreamy and flitting ideas, because the stomach is encroaching upon the brain. How much, then, shall we eat? It is certain that the palate, when excited by savory viands, cannot decide the question; but it is equally certain that common sense can.

Fasting is not a superstitious or ascetic habit. It need show no trace of either quality. The idea of it, indeed, has been strangely perverted by superstition, both in the East, when all solid food is prohibited but drinking even to drunkenness permitted, and in the West, when fish is substituted for flesh and all other foods partaken of as usual. But the true Christian fast rests upon two solid and well-defined principles. The first is, that in the floodtide of grief, of anxious longing, of complete conscious possession by some great purpose, no food is desired, and hence none should be taken (Luke v. 34, 35). The other principle is, that the occasional voluntary abstinence from food is beneficial to the whole being: on the one hand, cleansing the blood and clarifying the brain, while, on the other, strengthening the spirit's control of the flesh (2 Cor. vi. 4, 5; 1 Cor. ix. 27) and increasing its prayerfulness and power (Acts x. 30;

Matt. xvii. 21). The man who cannot cheerfully miss a meal, if need be, is not master of himself. The man who has not found that fasting is a better curative agent than any that can be bought of the apothecary has at least one important therapeutic discovery to make. The old proverb, "Feed a cold, and starve a fever," does not mean, as seems to be generally understood, that food is good for a cold and bad for a fever, but that it is bad for both—"Feed a cold, and the next thing, you will have a fever to be starved."

Have we learned to *breathe?* It must be done somehow, awake or asleep. Five minutes' failure would be fatal. Hence the dilation and contraction of the lungs, like the peristaltic action of the stomach, goes on involuntarily. But unlike the action of the stomach, it is also under the power of the will. We may breathe rapidly or slowly, strongly or feebly, according to our own volition; or for a few moments we may cease to breathe altogether. The question arises, therefore, whether our voluntary part in the process of breathing be well done.

Very few persons put themselves under any sort of regimen for realizing their possible lung power. The person who should do so, above all others, is the public speaker. Deep, full breathing, out of doors, is the requirement. An excellent time for the special practice of it is on starting out for a walk. It may easily become a habit, and is withal a pleasant and exhilarating exercise.

Have you ever cared to read the curious story of a sweat gland? If so, you will see very plainly why it is our duty to make the practical application of it in the frequent *bath,* and will appreciate, as never before, the aphorism that cleanliness is next to godliness.

Have we learned the rhythm of *activity and rest?* Activity without conscious resistance is play, or recreation; with conscious resistance, it is work; with the resistance becoming greater and greater, relatively to the energy put forth, it is labor and toil. The last form of activity we must plan to avoid; but work and recreation are wholly good and for the whole of life.

I once heard a minister of the gospel say, "I have worked as hard as any dray horse on the street." His sermons were labored productions, not lacking in substance, but heavy and hard to listen to. So it is likely to be, when the preacher does his work as a drudge or hack. Let us be strong men. Let us be well-conditioned, resourceful, tingling with vital energy. Then the specific preparation to preach will be steady and vigorous work—sometimes hard work, if you please—but accompanied with many an idea that comes of itself—not the half-desperate strain and pull of the weakling; and the product of the preparation will be a living thing. So we shall enter the study, day by day, as a house of life, and not as a treadmill.

But however it may be in the preparation to preach, the preaching itself must not be toilsome. There is hardly a more distasteful term with which to describe a sermon than the word *effort;* especially if a magnifying adjective be added, and we are told of a "great effort." What the pulpit calls for is not effort but power. The "wading" waterwheel, with a feeble stream filling its buckets, grind out the required grist with labor and difficulty, or possibly stops before its task is done. The loaded cannon looks quiet and serene enough when brought into action; but it needs only a spark of fire to waken its potential energy and let slip its thunderbolt

against the enemy's works. The sermon is to be fired off rather than ground out.

After work is recreation. Have you been studying hard? The brain begins to feel exhausted (not sluggish or indolent, which is a different matter): lift the pressure of the will, and let it rest by falling into some spontaneous activity. But the limbs have been doing very little: give them something more to do. Take exercise. The two best forms of it that I am well enough acquainted with to recommend are as old as they are simple—gardening and walking. The first may not be available to you just now; the other is always available. In the pure air and the healing sunshine—which, however, must also be abiding guests of the study—on the city street with its quick procession of human faces and forms, or by the roadsides and through the fields of the beautiful country, alone or in the company of a congenial friend, simply walking, with the erect carriage, the full-breathing lungs, and the easy motion of one who unconsciously does it right and well—where shall we seek a more inviting form of recreation? Keep out of the street car and the coach, and walk for your life. Is it irksome? Then there is all the more need that it shall be done. When that which should be pleasure and play affects us with a sense of toil, we have reached the point of danger.

After the little round of daily activity, we are bidden to sleep. If we can do it now as perfectly as in the artless and care-free period of life, happy are we.

> Be every mourner's sleep to-night,
> Like infants' slumber, pure and light.

It is well to pray for it, in behalf both of ourselves and

others; and it is also well to answer, as far as possible, our own prayers. There is much unrestful sleeping.

> "When I say, My bed shall comfort me,
> My couch shall ease my complaint,
> Then Thou scarest me with dreams,
> And terrifiest me through visions." (Job. iii. 13, 14.)

But it is not only the fever dreams of the diseased that steal away the recuperative power of sleep. Anxiety or disappointment will do it, fretting the nerves; fullness of bread will do it, embarrassing the circulation, and taxing the drowsy energies with the digestion of food. Sleep is submission. It is letting go. Those tense muscles, let them relax. No need of a strained position; the pillow and the bed will hold you. Those wandering thoughts, pursue them not; and if it provoke greater wakefulness to try to stop them, let them wander on—into oblivion. "But this nervous strain that I am under, what shall I do about it?" Do nothing whatever. Give up; it is God's word to you now. Sink down into the Everlasting Arms that are underneath us all, in the darkness as in the light.

But why these few health hints? who will heed them? It has been said that the worst man knows more truth than the best man does. It may certainly be said that, in the matter of health, our practice falls far below our knowledge. Many a young preacher is going down into physical feebleness or ruin, with his eyes wide open? Is he guiltless? What is it to be a Christian? Assuredly it is not to elect among the laws of God and say, "These I will observe, and those I will despise." It is to obey His laws in our whole being, soul and body. They are not all, indeed, of the same class—there is no "natural law in the spiritual world"—but it is one of the

laws of the soul that we shall obey the laws of the body. Therefore, willfully to violate them is sin, while conscientiously to observe them is virtue, manliness, power.

Let me remind you of a notable example. Is there a more vigorous and virile preacher in the world to-day than Dr. Joseph Parker at the age of threescore and ten? He is said to be now at his best—to have more hearers and to preach more effectively at the end of fifty years in the ministry than ever before. Leaving out of consideration his constant Sunday preaching and his literary work, to gather a great Thursday morning congregation in the heart of London, and hold it without abatement of interest for thirty years, as he has done, is a most rare achievement. What are his physical habits? Unwavering self-control, abstension from all intoxicants and narcotics, early rising, morning study, walking and dumb-bells for regular exercise; and much of his unflagging physical force and "thrust-power" in the pulpit he credits to the energetic use, just before preaching, of *cold water and a Turkish towel.*

Will you hear another testimony? Newman Hall, at eighty years of age, in reply to an inquiry of the New York *Herald* as to the habits which, according to his experience, best conduce to a "vigorous old age," wrote as follows:

As regards my personal habits, I have never smoked, and during sixty years have wholly abstained from all intoxicating drinks. I generally sleep from half-past eleven or twelve to seven or half-past. I sleep seven hours without waking. I take a cold bath every morning throughout the year. On an average, I walk four miles a day. I can still walk ten miles without fatigue. I generally have three services on Sunday, and am never Mondayish. On an average, I preach four times weekly, and neither suffer from pain nor fatigue. As to over-

work of brain, I would say, Give up working as soon as it is a weariness, and do the chief brain work early in the day. Do not work the brain late at night if you wish to sleep; and as to worry, do your duty and cast your care on the Lord, content with his approval and a good conscience.

The ideal is bodily unconsciousness. This, indeed, is our actual state, for the most part, at all times. How many of the million million events that are constantly occurring beneath the surface of our bodies make any report of themselves in consciousness? Who would ever have suspected even that he had an optic nerve or a brain, till he saw some one else's? It would be as impossible to see one's own as to see the dark side of the moon. Physiology is as strange as astronomy. Not until the seventeenth century of the Christian era did men begin to hear about the circulation of their own blood; and the story of it was rejected at first as incredible. Not one of the multitudinous red corpuscles making their ceaseless rounds, flying through the arteries, creeping through the capillaries, has ever said to the conscious self, "Here am I." It is a happy unconsciousness. Suppose that all the bodily organs, with their numberless activities, were incessantly obtruding upon our attention! It is the wounded member that cries out. It is the fatigued limb that is heavy. It is the overloaded stomach that, like the overloaded camel, groans in complaint. Disease makes itself known—that it may be healed; health is unconscious. One should prepare his toilet carefully, and then dismiss all thought of it from his mind; in like manner, one should care for his body as its needs may require, and then forget it. Think you that the skillful surgeon or musician, at the time of his performance, is concerned about his fingers? He is

unaware of having fingers. Neither is the eloquent speaker, in his best moments, aware of possessing hands or feet or tongue. To have the body facile to every emotion and to every act of the will, expressing the soul to others, but not expressing itself to the soul—that is the physical perfection at which we aim.

Here, as in every study of ourselves, we reach the height of the truth in turning with reverent joy to the Divine Man. He came eating and drinking; but it was ignorance or malice that charged him with gluttony and winebibbing. He was Life to the diseased and Resurrection to the dead. He knew, indeed, the limitations of the flesh, and made excuse even for those who could fall asleep in Gethsemane; yet we need hardly be reminded that Jesus showed always the supremacy of the soul. In his life, moreover, what wondrous intimations of that enduring body of glory of which the frail and vanishing body of flesh is the type. He walked upon the waves of the sea. His face shone as the light, and his garments whiter than snow, on the Mount of Transfiguration. He could not be holden of the grave, but rose in power: "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself," he says to the wonder-stricken disciples; and yet in how much greater a transfiguration does he now live and move. In him our whole nature is both interpreted and redeemed. Let us be like Jesus: we shall become like him;

> Soul and body
> Shall His glorious image bear.

IX

Involuntary Personal Influence

Two preachers stand in every pulpit. One is heard with the outward ear, the other in the spirit only. Sometimes the two speak the same thing, thus making it doubly effective. At other times there is contrariety or conflict, and resulting feebleness of utterance. The man himself, in his present personal act, and the man as his hearers believe him to be—these are the two preachers. There is the influence of the sermon, and inseparably interfused with it, to help or to hinder, the influence of the preacher's example—the speaking tongue and the speaking life.

Francis de Sales seems to have been a saint, not so-called but in fact. His popularity as a preacher was inexplicable to him. "I wonder," he said, "that the people in this great city flock so eagerly to hear me: my tongue is slow, my conceptions commonplace, my style prosy, as you can bear witness." But the friend to whom he thus opened his mind replied: "Do you think that rhetoric is what they look for in you? It is enough for them to see you enter the pulpit. Your heart shines through your countenance, and I know not what extraordinary power there is in you that makes every word strike deep. You have said everything when you have said nothing." Whereupon Francis, having little relish for eulogy, changed the subject of conversation. When the petitioners for the return of a certain Methodist preacher to a charge were told that the frailty of his health put it out of the question, their reply was: "If

Brother E—— would simply travel round the circuit and stand in our pulpits, without saying a word, it would do more good than some men's sermons." He was a man of limited culture, and of no extraordinary ability; but the most familiar truth fell from his lips with power, because energized by the personal influence of a sympathetic and saintly soul.

Now these are not startling or remarkable incidents: the like of them are occurring daily. But they serve the purpose of illustration all the better on this account. And unhappily there is no lack of instances illustrating the contrary kind of personal influence. It is sometimes said, and doubtless oftener silently felt: "That would have been an excellent sermon, if one could have forgotten who was delivering it." The most highly finished appeal for liberality to which I have ever listened was made by a preacher, very conspicuous in the pulpits and councils of his Church, whom the gospel seemed never to have saved from the love of money. I can hear, after the lapse of a quarter of a century, the music of his carefully prepared periods, the recurrence of his eloquent "Give," "Give," each time supported by an additional argument and enunciated with accumulating force. Am I altogether to blame, that the memory comes attended with pity for the speaker rather than enthusiasm for his cause?

"But truth is truth; it should be received for its own sake; it lays its obligation upon the conscience, independently of the person who utters it." Undoubtedly; yet the truth owes very much of its actual effect to the personal influence of its representative. Some have said, Principles, not men; others would emphasize the need of men rather than principles; but it is to princi-

ples *in* men, to men of principles and convictions, that the world, thus far in its history, has been chiefly indebted. God has not flung forth his truth into the world in impersonal and abstract forms. He has not left us to gather it up solely from his vast wonder-work of creation, or simply to listen in silence to the voice of his Spirit in the heart. He has given us also the ministry of our fellows. From men the truth of God, ingrained in the life of their own souls, is continually communicated to others; and it is largely through unconscious power.

The supreme expression of this principle is found in the Supreme Teacher of mankind, the Lord Jesus Christ. Will any one say that the effect of the teaching of Jesus is nowise due to the power of his personality? Indeed, in himself was the incarnation, in his life the perfect revelation of spiritual truth. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." To be with Jesus was to learn, to experience, to know that which not even his own words alone could give. His words were full-freighted with wisdom and power, but himself was the Wisdom and the Power of God; his words gave light to the world, but he was the Light of the world. And that which Jesus was, without defect or blemish, all those may become, in their measure, who walk with him in newness of life. Hence we hear him say to the first disciples, "Ye"—not their teachings—"*ye* are the light of the world." Certain it is that Christianity graciously embodied in a person shines with a more winning, penetrative, and transfiguring light than from any possible doctrinal system.

So, to speak more explicitly, there are two streams of personal influence, of that mysterious power that *flows in* upon one soul from another, going forth from every pulpit, as from every human life—the voluntary and

the involuntary, the conscious and the unconscious. The difference between them is easily recognized. For example, I am trying this moment, of set purpose, to persuade you to accept practically a certain great truth of human life. But you know *me;* and all unconsciously to myself, your opinion of the lecturer is also persuading you to listen either favorably or unfavorably to the lecture.

Need I remind you that both these modes of influence are subtle and secret in their operation? Like the ether-waves that science is imagining, like gravitation, which makes itself felt in the innermost atom of every mass of matter as truly and ceaselessly as on the surface, personal power is untraceable save in its effects. But if we may venture to make a distinction, the influence of example is the subtler and more penetrative of the two. Men feel its touch even on their inmost thoughts and motives, without forewarning; hence the will cannot gather up its energies for resistance, as is frequently done in the case of a voluntary exertion of influence. The most obstinate of men will sometimes allow themselves to be persuaded by those who are not trying to persuade them.

The two modes of influence may come into distinct expression in the same act. In speech, for instance, we use words which are the deliberate result of our thinking or the conscious outcome of our feeling. But in connection with the words are tones and facial expressions, which we are not conscious of and cannot control; and these are often more effective than the language itself.

> It is not is so much what you say
> As the manner in which you say it;

It is not so much the language you use
As the tones in which you convey it.
For words come from the mind,
And grow by study and art;
But the tones leap forth from the inner self,
And reveal the state of the heart.

Jacob may disguise his hand and cunningly choose his lying words; but while the hand is Esau's, still the voice is Jacob's. Simon Peter may deny that he has any acquaintance with the Prophet of Galilee, but he must speak his denial with the thick pronunciation of the Galilean dialect, and thus awaken a suspicion of his untruthfulness—"Of a truth thou also art one of them, for thy speech bewrayeth thee." Try to preach what you only half believe, and your doubtful mind will labor and waver in your voice. Conviction, on the other hand, will put forth its own characteristic and inimitable vocal signs. In the one case, it will be evident that you are saying what you think should properly be said; in the other, it will be equally manifest that you *"believe,* and *therefore* speak."

But not through the tones of the voice alone is this impalpable and unseen force discharged. From all that we do, it is ever flowing forth. Our whole life has its tone no less than its language.

It is inevitable. We are no more conscious of it than of the color of our eyes, and can no more prevent it than we can stop the circulation of our blood. Nor can we see how it could have been otherwise: that the world should have been differently constituted is inconceivable. We must make a self-revelation continually; and it must have its effect in the moral sphere as truly as the light that is reflected or the heat that is radiated from

our bodies affects the material world. Are we despondent and gloomy? Then are we casting shadows, in the home, in the social circle, in the Church, everywhere. Not that we would have it so; but according to the very laws of life, it must be so. In like manner, cheerfulness, gravity, triviality, earnestness, indolence, purity, vice, faith, unbelief—every moral quality, every temper and mood of the mind, good or evil, helpful or harmful—is contagious.

Will some man say, "I cannot endure the thought; I will not have my life moving out thus upon the lives of other people; I will retire from society, and spend my days henceforth in the utmost seclusion"? Vain indeed the expedient. Such a man's example as a recluse would be known, and would have its own peculiar share in shaping the views and conduct of others. Its very singularity would give it notoriety. Will a minister of the gospel say, "I am made a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men; I may do unspeakable harm; I will not have it so"? It must be so. Existence and influence are related in the constitution of our being as cause and effect; and where is the hand, cunning or powerful, that will undertake to sever that tie? A man would as well say, "I will not have lived," as to say, "No one shall be made better or worse by my life."

There is indeed a Resource and a Refuge; but it is not in any delusion of the fancy or impossible effort of the will. Still less is it in fatal indifference to the keen and inexorable demands of conscience. Does the sense of life's infinite solemnity press with a weight that threatens to paralyze our powers of action? In God is our refuge; in him who has "given us life and favor and whose visitation has preserved our spirit," who remem-

bers that we are dust, who is our Healer and Helper. In God is forgiveness, and grace, and everlasting strength.

> What time I am afraid
> I will put my trust in Thee.

Note some elements of power in the preacher's Christian example.

1. It is *interpretative of Scripture truth.* To get a firm grasp of abstract ideas is to all minds difficult, and to many impossible. The abstract must appear in some sensible form, or run the risk of being passed by unrecognized. What should we know of friendship, had we never possessed that priceless treasure, a friend? of courage, had we never seen a brave man? of the excellent beauty of goodness, had we never looked upon a spiritually beautiful character?

Hence the pages of the Bible are all astir with truth in human lives. Abraham, Judas, "a certain Samaritan," the Apostle to the Gentiles, are but more luminous names for faith, treachery and remorse, compassion, Christian zeal. Indeed, how does God reveal to the world his own infinite wisdom and power? In his acts. How did he make the revelation of redeeming love? Not in words only, but in many merciful and mighty deeds, till finally it was perfected in the Man Christ Jesus. Never before were men so well instructed in the knowledge of God as when it could be said, "As truth is in Jesus."

As a Christian teacher, therefore, you will not be content to deliver formulas of theology. You will be instinctively reaching out for illustrative examples, and will find them in the Bible and elsewhere. But there is one example which your are not thinking of, and which nevertheless is more constantly than any other in the

minds of the congregation. Your own life, written in an alphabet of daily deeds, read by everybody, illustrates your doctrine and makes it plain, or else, like a badly chosen instance, obscures the truth and produces doubt and confusion of mind. It was said of Robert Murray McCheyne, "To know him was the best interpretation of many texts." But if the light which is in us be darkness, great will be that darkness.

Indeed, a part of our daily conduct is our conduct in the pulpit itself; and just here the presence or absence of Christian graces will be very conspicuous. Take, for illustration, the spirit of reverence. Your congregation need to have this grace of character made real to their minds, that they may know what it is and in what kind of behavior it will be shown. Suppose, however, that your own manner in time of worship and preaching be careless and undevout; suppose that you seem to be taking no part in the devotions, except to direct them: will any sermon from your lips on the subject of reverence be likely to accomplish its object? On the other hand, if the preacher himself be truly reverent it will so appear to all; and the best possible illustration of his teaching on the subject will be given then and there.

2. It shows the *possibility of a Christian life.* There are many, it is true, who seem to think it a decidedly easy thing to be a Christian. They have an overcritical eye for the man who is making endeavors after such a life, and are never tired of picking flaws in his conduct. But there is also an opposite class, who feel inclined to doubt the possibility of holy living. These are ready to accept the Chinese proverb, "There are two good men, one is dead and the other unborn." Human nature is too depraved—so they think—the flesh too

weak, temptations too numerous, the world too wicked; a man cannot order his life on thoroughly New Testament principles; there may have been circumstances in which it could be done; doubtless there were saints in Bible times; but the like moral miracles are not to be looked for now. Some such half-defined notion enervates their moral energy and weakens their faith in Christianity itself.

Between these two extremes is the truth. It is not a slight or easy thing to be a Christian. No man ever put his hand to a greater undertaking. True, it is in the strict sense the natural life; but in man the unnatural has become habitual and easy. Every subhuman nature lives for its highest possibility, and accomplishes thus the end of its existence. The highest end of man is moral; it is to do consciously and voluntarily what the lower natures are doing of necessity—the will of God. But men in their depravity accept some lower end as their highest, and live for that. Accordingly they are prone to speak of this tendency to live for the lower end as their nature. Or they acknowledge a terrible conflict between the lower and the higher, between the "flesh" and the "spirit." And it is only through the Spirit of God helping our infirmities that we can obey "the law of our minds" and not be led into captivity to "the law of sin which is in our members." But here is the very heart of the gospel message: we may become sons of God; through the love of the Father, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the communion of the Holy Spirit, we may receive a spiritual mind and live the life of the righteous. Though difficult, yet now as truly as ever in the past, it is possible.

But how shall we prove it so to those who doubt?

The strongest proof that can be offered, the best logic that can be employed, is to show the fact of Christlike holiness and love in our lives. Every Christian is such an argument. It was said of Clerk Maxwell, the renowned scientific thinker, second to none of his generation, "He made faith in goodness easy to other men." Above all, the people's eyes are turned toward the man who is constantly proclaiming and teaching the kingdom of God, to see what practical proof of its transcendent realities he may have to offer. They can believe in the spirit of resignation which, in the sorest disappointment and sorrow, glorifies the will of God and fills the heart with heavenly peace; in incorruptible fidelity to Christ; in that love which is the fulfilling of the whole law—they can feel the reality of these things when they hear about them from the pulpit, if they have seen them in the speaker himself. Scholarship and argument avail much; but to live among men the life of sonship to God is the most convincing demonstration.

3. It is *full of human inspiration.* We are so made as to be very sensitive to the presence of other souls. In whatever way it may be manifested, we cannot fail to make some response. Without the stimulus of this dear human magnetism, the world would be dull and inactive indeed. Now one's example is the expression of one's most inner and real self, and so brings that into contact with others: it is the touch not simply of truth upon the soul, but of truth humanized—of soul upon soul, of life upon life.

Imagine a soldier enduring the fatigues and facing the dangers of a campaign, tramping through dust and mud, through rain and sleet, day after day, hundreds of miles; standing by the hour in the leaden storm of the

battlefield; marching deliberately up to a thousand mouths of flame—*alone*. Who could do it? But in companionship with other soldiers, in the army, even the feeble and timid are equal to the task. Imagine a soul endeavoring to live the Christian life, with all its labor and trial, alone. Not without instruction in the truth, not without the presence of the Holy Spirit; but without a Church, surrounded by the ungodly, and never having known a Christian man or woman or child. Because of Divine grace, we may not pronounce it impossible; but because of human isolation, it would be a way of extreme painfulness and danger. Full of beautiful meaning is the inscription upon the headstone of a certain little grave: "A child of whom her playmates said, It was easier to be good when she was with us." The light of Christian example does not merely illumine; it is the warm and quickening sunlight of the heart.

4. It is *transmissive of Divine power*. Unless God draw near and impart a sense of his presence to men, they will never arise and come to him. No more can a human hand, even the strongest, lift the fallen soul, or strengthen it in the way of righteousness, than the soul can uplift and strengthen itself. God alone, the Creator, is Saviour. But has he not many ways of approach to us all? And one of them is the life of a brother soul. From the face and conduct of a holy man God's glory and power shine forth as they do not from the noonday or the midnight heavens. What an enrapturing thought that God—whom men cannot see and hear when unbelief has closed their hearts—may be in us, so that through us he will appear to other men for their salvation. Thus our unconscious influence will not be ours alone; it will be a human breath bearing a

superhuman and life-giving energy, a light of the world that is the outshining of Christ in the heart. Said Chevalier Bunsen, as he drew near death, looking with reverent love into the face of his noble Christian wife, "In thy face I have seen the Eternal."

> Though He is so bright and we are so dim,
> We are made in his image to witness him.

What is the source of our strength and confidence in preaching? The conviction that we are not alone or speaking of ourselves. The Word is given us of God in our thought and heart, and through our will and speech is communicated to the people from him. "Lo, I am with you alway." Without this, there is nothing that the minister as preacher can do; and beyond this there is nothing to be asked or sought. But the very same thing is true of his and of every Christian's daily life. It is of God, it is in the Spirit; and it is thus transmissive of Divine power to the world.

Our chief contribution, then, to the coming of the kingdom of God is through personality. Full of significance was our Lord's description of John the Forerunner's brief and powerful ministry: "He was the lamp that burneth and shineth: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." Here are two related characteristics of a flame—it *burns,* and as a result *shines.* Every Christian preacher ought to be such a light-bearer as that young martyr-preacher of whom this word of Christ was spoken. It may still be read on the pulpit of Henry Martyn in India—"He was a burning and a shining light." May it be written on yours! And if any one should ask, How may I shine? the answer is, By becoming a flame—by the personal experience of love for righteousness, of zeal for God, of holy

passion for souls. A burning must be a shining lamp, to have the spirit is to have the power of a prophet (Luke i. 17); and after all has been said, it remains that the true and effectual way of doing good to others is to be good ourselves.

PART FOURTH

IN THE IMPULSE TO PREACH

"If I were young again, I would strive to be, not in the low, vulgar, selfish sense, but in the high, self-forgetful sense, a popular preacher. I would toil for this as I would for virtue itself. If graces of speech would make me such, I would cultivate these. If youthful enthusiasm would draw men to me, I would keep my heart fresh and young for a hundred years. If simplicity of style and manner would effect it, I would practice the severest simplicity. If going among the people would help me, I would fling aside all conventionalities and reclusive habits, and go from shop to shop, and from tenement to tenement, till my soul was saturated with the thoughts and feelings of lowly men. If a new baptism of power were needed, I would plead for that till I received the anointing. I would exhaust all possibilities that I might win the scattered, listless multitudes to listen to the gospel I was ordained to preach."—Bishop W. X. Ninde.

I

The Preaching Spirit

It is no slight guarantee of success to realize the spirit of one's calling. It implies harmony between certain large portions of the inner and the outer life; and harmony means peace, freedom, power. The man who loves his work is likely to do well. But maladjustment is inevitable waste of energy: he whose heart is in some other calling will probably make an unhappy failure of his own.

Call to mind the men who are accomplishing most in their respective spheres of effort: you cannot fail to notice the eager interest, the sustained enthusiasm, with which their minds are set upon the chosen work. It is their thought and dream, their hope and endeavor, the food and medicine of their daily life.

Who can think of an Arnold of Rugby or an Edison uninterested in his own occupation and pining for some other? You will probably find the same to be true of the best editor or housebuilder or farmer or physician within your knowledge. Dr. Mark Hopkins refused invitation after invitation to more lucrative positions, that he might devote his life to the work that he loved in an out-of-the-way college, and became, as to personal influence, the foremost of American educators. It is related of Charles Wesley that when disabled by an accident, his first exclamation was, "No more hymn-writing for some days to come." On his deathbed, unable to write, he dictated the last of his more than six thousand sacred songs,

In age and feebleness extreme.

Ought not the preacher, in like manner, whatever his gifts or his deficiencies, to have the preaching spirit? Indeed, nothing can be taken as a substitute for it—not the most extraordinary endowments of eloquence, not "the passionate patience of genius," not even deep and genuine piety. He must hold and prize the truth; but he must also have the impulse of utterance. "The word of faith which we preach" must be in his *mouth* as well as in his *heart* (Rom. x. 8). Then his soul will tingle at the presence of an audience, as the microscopist's at the sight of a microscope, or the writer's at the touch of a pen. And his ideas will ever be crystallizing into sermons, just as an architect's take the shape of houses, or as the poet "builds the lofty rhyme." Materials of preaching will come to him unsought—by the magnetism of the mind selecting and attracting to itself such facts and truths as have affinity for its moods. No two men listening to the same conversation, reading the same newspaper, looking upon the same scene, hearing the same sermon, will get for themselves exactly the same ideas. What each receives will depend upon the receptive capacity, which is different in each from that of all the others. "Some men dig worms out of the ground, others dig up truth." How freely do texts occur to the mind of the alert preacher—and "outlines," and doctrines, and illustrations, and appeals, and all manner of sermonic thoughts and suggestions—often finding their right places and fitting themselves into one another, like the revivified bones in the prophet's vision. When and where? Not only in the study during the time of direct preparation for the preaching hour, but in miscellaneous reading, in the observation of human life, alone and in company, at odd times and at any time.

"I have adopted the plan," says Norman Macleod in the "Journal" of his early ministry, "of keeping a note-book which I call 'Hints for Sermons,' in which I put down whatever may prove useful for my future ministrations." If in the case of any young preacher such an expedient were useless, we might suppose it to have been so with Macleod. Yet, with all his wonderful mental vivacity and fluency of speech, he was careful, because of the spirit that was in him, to write down and preserve his homiletic thoughts. But while the note-book is good, the open soul, not content with past acquisitions, but ever receiving new impressions and ideas, is essential. You have heard of some noted man—Henry Ward Beecher or Charles H. Spurgeon, for example—who jotted down a few notes on Saturday evening or Sunday morning, and with this apparently superficial preparation, delivered powerful sermons; and the story of so extraordinary a genius filled you with despairing admiration. Let me suggest that possibly you could preach after his method, if you had his spirit. Such men are not superficially prepared. Their secret is, that they do not waste their time or allow their energies to be divided and dispersed. They are internally sermonizing and preaching throughout the week—revolving Scripture truths in their minds, reading, writing, observing, meditating, all with more or less reference to the coming Sunday; and when the time comes, there is little more necessary than to mark out an orderly channel in which so much of the truth as they may have occasion to dispense shall flow to the congregation.

When Spurgeon was asked, at an informal ministers' meeting in his own home, to explain his way of making sermons, he replied:

It is not easy for me to tell you precisely how I make sermons. All through the week I am on the lookout for material that I can use on the Sabbath; but the actual work of arranging it is necessarily left until Saturday evening, for every other moment is fully occupied in the Lord's service. I have often said that my greatest difficulty is to fix my mind upon the particular texts which are to be the subjects of discourse on the following day; or, to speak more correctly, to know what topics the Holy Spirit would have me bring before the congregation. As soon as any passage of Scripture really grips my heart and soul, I concentrate my whole attention upon it, look at the precise meaning of the original, closely examine the context so as to see the special aspect of the text in its surroundings, and roughly jot down all the thoughts that occur to me concerning the subject, leaving to a later period the orderly marshaling of them for presentation to my hearers. ("Autobiography," vol. iv., pp. 65, 66.)

We may venture to imitate such a preacher in preparing for the pulpit, only if we are careful to follow his whole example—if our life and experience are such as will impel us to say with the psalmist, "My heart overfloweth with a goodly matter" (Ps. xlv. 1), or with the apostles Peter and John, "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard" (Acts iv. 20). The sermon, in such case, like a hymn or other lyric poem, will be in the truest sense an *effusion.*

Conspicuous examples of the preaching spirit are abundant. Martin Luther preached more than once on the journey that he made at the risk of his life to the Diet of Worms. Sent home, after examination by the Diet, to be treated as a heretic, and specifically forbidden by the emperor to preach on the way, "in Eisenach he preached, regardless of the imperial interdiction, for the Word of God should not be bound." (Acts v. 40-42.) After a long and beclouded seeking he had found

God in Christ, and must preach him—"I can do no other." Of Archbishop Leighton it is said, "Sunday to him was a festival day." Rowland Hill averred, in his peculiar style of speech, that he would rather be shut up in his coffin than shut out of the pulpit. Asbury, in a time of sickness and utter exhaustion, wrote in his "Journal," "How difficult it is to keep silent!" When Bishop George F. Pierce, stricken with fatal disease, was hardly able to stand on his feet, and the friend at whose house he was staying advised him not to attempt to preach, his reply was: "If preaching does not cure me, nothing will." After a pulpit ministry of fifty years, Dr. Joseph Parker said to his congregation: "I have not found my livelihood here and my enjoyment somewhere else. . . . God has enabled me to see that there is nothing under heaven like preaching the gospel, and no sphere so great and so productive in the best results as the sphere pastoral." Shall we wonder at such men's power and success?

Now there is danger of narrowness. The enthusiast in his calling must ever fear the tendency to dwarf himself to the dimensions of a single idea. The long-continued attempt to master and practice some science or art as one's life work may insensibly lead to another result—to being mastered by it. Even though the calling be that of the Christian ministry, the man must not be sacrificed to the office. But neither is there any necessity that he should be. The preaching spirit, in its fullest measure, need not check or limit any of our mental powers. Indeed, to which of them does it not offer a fair promise of activity? Especially will it call into constant exercise the highest faculties. All its affinities and aspirations are noble. Dealt with wisely, it

will lift the whole life to a higher plane. Therefore, you may be a specialist, finding not only "good in everything," but sermons in everything, and yet not declining but increasing all the while in intelligence, in tact, in humanity. You may live in touch with all the great movements of the day, may fly kites or play ball with the boys, may keep your heart sensitive to all humanizing influences and to the intellectual life of the world, and yet faithfully follow the apostolic injunctions: "Give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching—neglect not the gift that is in thee—be diligent in these things—give thyself wholly to them." As many grand examples show, it is possible to become a most intelligent and big-hearted man, whom anybody, young or old, would like to meet with and talk to, and at the same time an enthusiastic maker of sermons. It was the large-souled greatness of the man that always impressed both the casual hearers and the personal friends of Phillips Brooks; and yet the whole man was transfused into the preacher: "Preaching was the one exclusive object that occupied his mind. The message to be delivered and the form it should take in order to be most effective—to that simple end he devoted himself. From morning till night, in every hour of leisure or apparent relaxation, on his journeys, in vacations, in social assemblies, he was thinking of subjects for sermons, turning over new aspects of old truths, thrilled inwardly with the possibility of giving better form than had yet been given to old, familiar doctrine. In a word, he concentrated his thought upon one thing—it was preaching."

Note some of the distinct *Advantages* secured to one's ministry by this spirit of preaching.

(1) *Economy of time.* No one need be told how much

sooner he can accomplish a piece of work—especially if it be creative intellectual work—when his heart is in it. He will utilize many a by-moment that would otherwise have been lost—spontaneously, unconsciously gathering up the fragments of time and making them tell upon the final result of his labors. He will work intensely; the products will be each a precious bit of his own life; and one day will be better than many days in an unloved employment. Boys play much faster than they work, and when labor itself becomes pleasure it will be done rapidly; not "slow and sure" but, as Daniel Quorm would say, "swift and sure" will be the rule.

(2) *Readiness to speak.* The occasions for public speaking in the case of the preacher are so numerous, and the opportunities for specific preparation are frequently so meager, that it behooves him to live in a state of habitual readiness. I have seen the motto on a man-of-war, *Semper paratus.* Nothing will better serve to make good such a motto in an evangelical ministry than the preaching spirit. It will rarely allow the preacher to be taken unawares, any more than the warship is surprised and embarrassed when ordered into battle. He will seldom, if ever, be heard complaining, "I don't feel like preaching," or "I have nothing to say." One of the readiest speakers of our day said, after an impromptu Sunday-school address that had elicited some congratulatory comments, "They tell me I am always ready, but in fact I am never ready; I am always getting ready." Such a man, if never ready according to his own high ideal, is never *un*prepared; he *is* always ready.

Here is the secret of the best impromptu work: the fountain needs only to be unsealed, that it may sparkle

and flow. When Charles Kingsley was requested by a young lady to write in her album, he handed her back the book in a few minutes with a stanza that is still touching many a young life to fine issues—"Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever"—glorifying one of the pages. Could he do as well every time? No; for all minds have their higher and their lower moods. But there would have been little risk of disappointment in making a similar request at any time of a man whose lifelong purpose and joy it was to tell with tongue or pen the ideas that possessed him, the truth that he knew.

Let us turn away from all others, and reverently learn from the example of the one Teacher. The student of the Gospels cannot fail to notice the occasionalism of Jesus' teaching. There was nothing in his ministry corresponding to our periodic appointments to preach. He taught everywhere, at all times, and constantly at the call of circumstance and occasion. It was when asked by a scribe, Who is my neighbor? that he spoke the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke x. 29-37) when interrupted by one of his hearers with the request, "Bid my brother divide the inheritance with me," that he gave the parable of the Foolish Rich Man (Luke xii. 13-21); when tempted by his enemies with the adroit test question as to the lawfulness of tribute to the Roman government, that he announced the all-inclusive principle, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. xxii. 15-21); when the disciples wished to know who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, that he admonished them, "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 1-3); after the miracle of the

loaves, that he declared himself to be the Living Bread (John vi. 35); at the grave of Lazarus, that he appeared as the Resurrection and the Life (John xi. 25). To mention all such instances would be to quote the larger part of the Gospels. Our wisdom often comes too late. When the occasion is past, we think regretfully of the word that might have been fitly spoken. But Jesus was never unequal to the occasion. The perfect word of truth and love dwelt upon his lips. Is not here a perfection toward which we, as disciples and messengers of Jesus, may continually aspire? "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one" (Col. iv. 6).

(3) *Freshness and vitality.* This love of preaching acts as a genuine spirit of life, quickening all one's powers. It multiplies ideas, and is constantly showing the old familiar truths in new aspects and relations. It gathers for itself first-hand from every field. Hence when the time comes for the delivery of the sermon, the preacher will meet his congregation because he has a sermon to preach and not because he must preach one.

But there are many antagonistic influences, and the spirit of preaching will have to be cherished and strengthened. No matter how much of it one may have, he may lose it all; no matter how little, he may add indefinitely to its power. What, then, are its *Means of Cultivation?*

(1) We may be sure that it will be increased by the preacher's personal advancement in *Christian experience and character.* True, one may have the Christian spirit without the preaching spirit; but one cannot have the latter without the former. He may, indeed, feel a strong desire to entertain an audience or to produce an

oratorical effect: the sprightly youth feels this at times when he has nothing worth while to communicate. "I also will show mine opinion," says Elihu the Buzite, young and self-confident, "for I am full of words; the spirit within me constraineth me, . . . I will speak, that I may be refreshed." And the preaching spirit may include somewhat of this temperamental eagerness to come into emotional contact with an audience. But its essential element is different. It is awakened by a living word of God in the soul, which, like all life, craves embodiment. The untutored prophet felt it when, derided for speaking in the name of the Lord, he said, "The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (Amos iii. 8.) Paul felt it when, shrinking in fear from his arduous undertaking in Corinth, he nevertheless labored there for eighteen months "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." But the word of the Lord is not given to unprepared souls. It comes to him only who, through the renewing of the Holy Spirit, is made capable of receiving it.

Does your preaching threaten to be a task-work rather than a holy delight? Do not too quickly find the explanation in your peculiarities of temperament, in the irksomeness of intellectual toil, in the painful pressure of responsibility. Allow some weight to these considerations; but chiefly strive to become a better man. Try more than ever the uplifting power of prayer. Abide continually in the presence of God. Come down "the holy mount," like the apostles, not from the Lord, but with him, to meet the multitude on the plain. And while difficulty and toil and all natural infirmities may remain, the gift that is in you will be stirred up; and to preach the kingdom of God, revealed and established in

your own heart, will become more and more a congenial and blessed employment.

(2) Moreover, a great stimulus to this love and zeal for preaching is given by the *pastoral work*. Some complain of having no time for such work, as if the interests of their pulpit itself did not demand it. Rest assured, these two functions of our office are not best performed when set asunder and assigned to different servants of the Church—one for the pulpit, the other for pastoral service. Nor need the sermon and the household visitation watch each other with a jealous eye. On the contrary, each may inure to the enrichment of the other. What is needed "for the work of the ministry, for the perfecting of the saints," is the preacher in the home and the pastor in the pulpit. It is the man who has spoken to them the word of God with power in the congregation that the people would have as their trusted spiritual counselor and personal friend. On the other hand, in all pastoral ministration the preacher gains for himself and his pulpit in full proportion to what he gives. When it was said of David Dickson, a famous Scotch preacher of the seventeenth century, that, after his acceptance of a chair in the theological department of the Glasgow University, his preaching declined somewhat in sweetness and force, "No wonder," he replied, "for I have lost my *books*." He had been deprived of pastoral intercourse with his *people*. Dr. Cuyler, in his farewell sermon, at the close of a thirty-years' pastorate, in which the membership of his church had grown from two hundred to over two thousand, said to the congregation: "Pastoral work has always been my passion. . . . To carry out thoroughly a system of pastoral oversight, visit every family, stand by sick and dying beds, to put

oneself in sympathy with aching hearts and bereaved households, is a process that has swallowed up time, and, I tell you, it has strained the nerves prodigiously. Costly as the process has been, it has paid. If I have given sermons to you, I have gotten sermons from you." But these are only two among a thousand similar testimonies.

Therefore, in seasons of heaviness, or when inclined to occupy our thoughts too much, relatively, with some literary or political or merely personal matter, let us draw closer to our brother men, and especially to our brother Christians, in the ways that we have learned of Christ, and there will surely be a revival of preaching in our pulpits.

The parish priest
Of Austerlitz
Climbed up in a high church steeple,
To be near God,
So that he might hand
His word down to the people.

And in sermon script
He daily wrote
What he thought was sent from heaven;
And he dropt this down
On his peoples' heads
Two times one day in seven.

In his wrath, God said,
"Come down and die";
And he cried from the steeple,
"Where art thou, Lord?"
And the Lord replied,
"Down here among my people."

(3) Still again, this spirit may be encouraged by the *voluntary direction and control of the thoughts.* For it is thus that, within certain limits, we can call up in

the mind any feeling that we may will to experience. Not directly, but indirectly, through the thoughts.

To illustrate. Supposing I wish to cause this or that emotional state in some other person's mind, how shall I proceed? I cannot say, "Be glad, be amazed, be amused, laugh, weep," and reasonably expect to be obeyed. But I may accomplish my purpose mediately, through the person's thoughts. These are the underground passages to the citadel of the emotions, which cannot be carried by direct assault. I can communicate to my friend ideas, perceptions, reasonings, that, under the immutable laws of the mind, will produce corresponding feelings. I tell him good news, and he is glad. I relate a pathetic story—the tears are in his eyes. It is vain to bid a depressed person be cheerful, or a dull hearer interested; but it is not vain to raise in his mind images whose natural effect is cheerfulness or inquisitiveness—just as it would be useless to command a child or a plant to grow, but by no means useless to feed it.

Similarly has it been given us to change and govern our own intellectual states, and through them our desires and emotions. You may look on either the bright or the dark side of any situation in life, and become pleased or sad accordingly. So with all our emotions. So with the spirit of holy earnestness, love, and joy in setting forth the word of God's grace. "*Meditate* on these things"—on the things that belong to the kingdom of God; and there will arise in your heart a keener sense of their reality, and a stronger desire to declare them. Do you love to preach? You must love it. And you may; for love, under the guidance of wisdom and the administration of the will, may be either minished and brought low, or enthroned in power.

Control your *reading* homiletically. Are there not some books that excite and foster the preaching spirit, and others that have a neutral or even contrary effect? Make a daily study of some portion of the Bible—say the Gospel According to Luke or the Book of Psalms—and lines of thought on sacred themes will so gleam and brighten out of the darkness, revealing, suggesting, inciting, that erelong there will be no lack either of truths to tell or of inclination to tell them. Compare the homiletic effect of reading a book of theology and a book of literary criticism, or the "History of the Protestant Reformation" and the "History of England," or "Travels in Palestine" and "Travels in Search of an Open Polar Sea," or Bushnell's "Sermons on Living Subjects" and "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," or a religious and a secular newspaper; and you will not need to ask what kind of books and periodicals to read when your mind needs to be renewed in the spirit of its calling. "Take heed therefore what ye hear."

In like manner we may control our *solitary musings.* Think of something we must all the time. Memories, fancies, intuitions, flow into the mind as incessantly and irresistibly as the forces of external nature act upon the body. These ideas indeed are given, not sought or gained; but they are given us to control, accepting or rejecting, cherishing or forbidding. Would you then deepen and intensify the preaching spirit? Do not suffer a wandering mind. Pray the psalmist's prayer: "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way." Even in time of leisure, often in moments of solitude, let thought recur to the truths of your Christian life and ministry, and linger among them as its central themes. "Meditate *on these things.*"

(4) Worthy of emphasis also is the fact, that the preaching spirit is increased by *continual preaching*. It is an illimitable desire, and will grow by what it feeds on. But if it be long ungratified and inactive, the tendency is to declension. Richard Cecil said that were he to preach only once a month, he could not preach at all. Whitefield, whose sermons for many years averaged ten a week, seems to have been always eager for the pulpit. The preaching of the gospel is no exception to the rule, that the more one does in any great and good work, the more he can do and wishes to do. It is sound advice, both with respect to falling in with opportunities to preach and with respect to the actual delivery of the sermon, Let yourself *go*.

In a word: The single-minded preacher will realize the excellence of his apostolic vocation—will live and act, on Sunday and every day, in the evangelical preaching spirit. He need not be abstracted or bigoted or crotchety or destitute of the common knowledge, the common affections, the common sense of men; but he will be a specialist. Preaching is his business, the holiest and noblest work permitted to human powers; and he will magnify his office. He will not covet gold or worldly honor; he will ask nothing better in life than to set forth the gospel in its simplicity and fullness; he will seek as his reward to become and to do that whereunto he is called—because therein will Christ be lifted up before the world, and for him to live is Christ.

II

Expedient and Law

No one can preach from expedients. When Henry Drummond was in this country, taking part in evangelistic meetings, a young man wrote to him, "I am so pleased with your style of speech that I venture to ask how you acquired it." As if such speech were an art to be learned offhand! I was once strongly moved to make a similar request of a preacher whose words kept haunting my imagination somewhat as Drummond's had cast their spell upon his naïve young inquirer. The question I was fain to ask was not lacking in specificness: "What books do you read?" This, I thought, must win forth the secret of power. One may learn by certain simple means to compound medicines or to keep accounts, so that his work will be indistinguishable from that of any other good pharmacist or bookkeeper. Why should not the same be true of preaching?

The answer is easy enough. To preach is a personal work. When we give the pharmacist a prescription to be filled, or put our accounts in the hands of a bookkeeper, we not only consent but require that the work shall be done exactly as any other competent man would do it—that there shall be no marks of the worker's individuality. Do we demand, likewise, that one man's sermon and preaching shall be the duplicate of another's? We could not bear to have it so. The man must be so identified with the message that it will take the form of his own individual thought, experience, and utterance.

Nevertheless we are not to despise expedients. Plans, methods, means are a necessary part of the preacher's equipment. What would men be able to accomplish without tools—such as letters, money, fire—or without modes of procedure intelligently chosen and followed? When preachers meet together for the interchange of views, it is practical oftener than doctrinal topics that are talked over. How may I best deliver the message with which I am charged? is evidently a question that lies close to their hearts. Nor can the criticism be made that herein the modern preacher has departed from the ways of even the greatest of prophets and apostles. Isaiah learned of the Lord not only what to say but also how to say it. That he might catch the attention of his hearers, and secure their approval of the oracle that lay as a burden on his heart, he told the story of a dear friend of his who planted a vineyard that brought forth wild grapes (Isa. v. 1-7)—seeking to "turn the flank of his people's prejudices by an attack in parable on their sympathies"; he gave his two children names which signified the Divine judgments that should overtake the nation, and the remnant that would be spared (ch. vii. 3; viii. 3, 4); he walked barefoot and half clad, as a sign of the hopelessness of trusting in one great world-power for deliverance from another (ch. xx.); he set forth his visions in the noblest and most rememberable words. The Apostle to the Gentiles went from the place of his heavenly vision not to Jerusalem or Rome, but into Arabia to prepare in solitude for his ministry (Gal. i. 17, 18); he preached the gospel in Corinth with deliberate avoidance of excellency of speech or of wisdom (1 Cor. ii. 1-5); he was ready to help his fellow-Jew bear the expenses of a Nazarite offering, and to go with him,

ceremonially purified, into the temple, if thereby he might set himself right before the people (Acts xxi. 17-26); he demanded, as a Roman citizen, that his case should be brought before the emperor, thus avoiding the enemies who were lying in wait to kill him on the way to Jerusalem, and at the same time gaining the long-coveted opportunity to preach the gospel in Rome (Acts xxv. 1-11; Rom. i. 11-13); he unhesitatingly declared, "I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some" (1 Cor. ix. 22). Paul would do anything for expediency's sake, so it were not against conscience or love. (Read Acts xxvii.)

But we are also to bear in mind the universal prevalence of law, or, to speak more truly, the reign of God. Men are constantly producing changes, of their own free will, in the natural world. Nature left to itself through millions of ages would never grind our wheat, or weave our garments, or build our houses. It is we ourselves, as true and original causes, that do these things. Nevertheless we could do none of them in disregard of natural law. "Nature is conquered by obedience." So, likewise, in the spiritual world. That is no lawless and ungoverned realm. Our relations to other souls are regulated by law as truly as our relations to the ground that we plow or the fruits of the earth that we cultivate. Whatever intellectual or moral influence we would exert, it must be put forth within and not outside or across the bounds of law. Would you please your neighbor? Would you become a master of assemblies? Would you taste the unselfish joy of a fruitful ministry? It is not an impossible aim. The world of mind and spirit in which you are now operating may be conquered; but only, like the world of na-

ture, by obedience. Thinking must be done according to certain intuitive and unprovable truths; remembering, through association of ideas; the excitation of emotion, through sympathetic contact with other souls; conscience is awakened by setting before it two conflicting motives, the highest and a lower; action is influenced by the presentation of practical reasons; spiritual life is received through communion with God, the Father of spirits; over against every need of our nature, from the lowest to the highest, from hunger for bread to hunger for the living God, there is a corresponding good in which alone the need may find its satisfaction,—these, for example, are some of the laws of intellectual and spiritual being to which we must give heed in the doing of the Christian preacher's work. But within the scope of these laws there is room for the use of all possible practical wisdom.

What, then, are some of the means and methods by which the impulse to preach may be wisely directed?

1. *Laying up homiletic material.* Ideas, which are the wealth of the mind, will often, like material riches, make to themselves wings and fly away. Shadowy and fleeting, they come and go. What will give them reality, distinctness, permanence? Must it not be a happy homiletic art, so to cherish and domesticate the thoughts, imaginings, illustrations which the spirit of preaching gathers into the mind, as to have them ever at command?

It is largely a matter of memory. But memory is a matter not of the intellect only, but of the heart and conscience as well. It is not mere memorizing. What do we remember? It is that which we know by heart, or, in other words, that which we care for and love; and

what we love is an unerring sign of what we are. Attention, clear thinking, repetition, truthfulness, quietness of mind,—these are conditions of memory; but back of them all is the primary condition of interest, or love. Said Irenæus concerning the things that he had heard from Polycarp, who was familiarly acquainted with the apostle John and others that had seen the Lord Jesus: "These things, by the mercy of God, and the opportunity then offered me, I attentively heard, noting them down, not on paper, but in my heart; and these same facts I am always in the habit by the grace of God to recall faithfully to mind." Supposing all our books and manuscripts to be swept away by fire, and no others to be accessible, what things should we be able to tell? what answers should we get to inquiries made of ourselves? Such things as we had noted down, not on paper, but in the heart. These are ours, and in the possession of them we are either rich or poor.

Still there is need of some external means for supplying deficiencies of memory, in the storing up of material for preaching. Many have been recommended. The very simple method that has seemed sufficient in my own practice, for the last thirty-five years, is all that I have to offer. It can claim at least to have done service in the preparation of hundreds of sermons and lectures—the one, for example, to which you are supposed to be listening at this time.

Have two books, corresponding somewhat to the merchant's day book and ledger. First, a memorandum book for the vest pocket. In this little volume, make note, as promptly as possible, of thoughts as they occur, in reading, in conversation, in church, on the street, in moments of meditation or of business. The other is

for classification and permanent record—the Homiletic Notebook. Let it be indexed with a list of preaching topics. These need not be minutely subdivided; for all subjects of preaching may be conveniently included under comparatively few titles. But of the number and generality of the topics, you can best judge for yourself. Indeed, you need make out no list at the start: the various materials, as they are gathered, will themselves call for the appropriate class names. Now and then transfer your memoranda to their proper places in this Notebook; and behold, your homiletic treasury is at the same time being constructed and filled.

Along with this arrangement, two others may be noticed. You will doubtless keep a record of Scripture passages that present themselves from time to time as suitable texts for preaching. At the time of writing them down, you will also briefly indicate such lines of thought as they have already suggested. Now some of your "thoughts as they occur" will attach themselves to these texts at once, passing the Notebook by. Some, also, may be added to the manuscripts of sermons already preached, and thus find their opportunity when the occasion for repreaching arises.

It is not good to live from hand to mouth. Let us be mentally provident, that we may become mentally well-to-do. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard." I am under engagement to preach next Sunday. What have I to give the people? Only that which I may succeed in getting for them meantime? or that which I have brought to them more than once perhaps already? Then am I a poor preacher. Let me always have this or that text, this or that theme, already quickened with ideas, partly developed, ready to take on its complete form for

delivery to the congregation. This method is surely one of the things that are both "lawful" and "expedient."

2. *Taking a hint and thinking through.* In social intercourse, the slightest word or look is so significant to some minds that no outspoken information is needed. They are sensitive and sagacious enough to take a hint. In prospecting for minerals, a sign that other men would pass unnoticed will lead the expert observer to most valuable discoveries—to great lodes of iron or coal that have lain for ages in their hidden places. Similarly, in the search for truth, there is an art of taking hints, an interpreting of signs. A single word of Scripture, an everyday occurrence, a chance remark, a "sunbeam glancing on a cloud," are outward signs of deep-lying truths to whoever is wise and alert enough to take the hint. To know them is to know something of "what God and man is."

But such a beginning, let us remember, is a beginning only. Certainly—to take the preacher's case—it is not a sermon. Hold your idea up in the light. Think away its vagueness, think out its innermost meaning, think up its associated truths. No feeling round for books. No laying hold of the pen. Think. Keep your eyes off the window; vain is the hope of help in that direction. Nor does the fire need stirring; let it alone. It is worse than useless to quit your room and seek the pleasantness of the porch or the fields. Such attractions will prove to be distractions. What you are secretly longing for is diversion; but what you need is serenity and concentration. Walk the floor, if you will; for this will quicken the circulation, and throw blood into the brain. But tearing the hair is of no

avail, and impatient exclamations will only hinder the intellectual process. Be sweet-tempered. If interrupted, take it kindly: it is no great matter—very different from interrupting oneself. Think your subject along its main lines thoroughly—that is to say, *throughly*—so that you could tell it to a friend or write it out.

There is no one method of success in this art of thought. "The way to preach," said an old preacher, when asked his opinion about it, "is to preach every way." Certainly that is the way to think. Generalize, infer, let the association of ideas lead you gently along, but refuse to follow—as you will constantly have to do—when it would lead you astray. Above all things, look and *see*. Poor eyesight, or even the appalling calamity of blindness, brings a blessing of compensation to students. What they read they think; without reading they are patient and strong to think; and thus their very "darkness shows them worlds of light" which they never saw by day. Think passionately. Let the tears come. Thinking is not mere intellection; it is the stir and movement of the whole man, with the intellect in the lead. You are no mathematician; and even if you were, there would be a beating heart beneath the iron armor of your abstract reasonings—the stress of desire and longing, the thrill of joy. The secret of success is simply to keep on till the piece of work is done.

If the art is difficult, still it is acquirable. "How long will it take to learn to play the violin?" asked a young man of a celebrated musical artist. "Twelve hours a day for twenty years together," was the answer. It is a lifetime work. "I made up my mind at the beginning of my ministry," says the aged Dr. Alexander

Maclaren, "not to write sermons, but to think and feel them; and I have stuck to it ever since." Which would you prefer, to play the violin or to think sermons through with heart and brain? How many hours, then, are you willing to devote to your chosen art? No danger of injuring the brain. On the contrary, it will improve, like any other organ, under regular and vigorous exercise. Four or five hours of this close, original thinking, for four or five days of the week, and in the morning, will suit your purpose admirably; and it will be in every way beneficial. At the risk of giving offense, I will suggest that the chief cause of your failure thus far is intellectual indolence. There is much laziness of the limbs; but more common and harder to overcome is the laziness of the brain. Nevertheless it may be overcome; and facility may be acquired, attended with a distinct intellectual joy, in handling a subject with the mind alone. So will the sermon not be made in patchwork or crazy-quilt fashion, but woven throughout.

3. *Thinking with the pen.* Here we employ a mechanical expedient; but the process is oftentimes more difficult than simple, unaided thinking. The name that has been given to the productions of an author is singularly appropriate—*works*. "There is no work known to man," says Professor George H. Palmer, "more difficult than writing." Why should this be so? It is not simply because of the difficulty of deliberate expression, but also because the writer, in finding the exact language in which to communicate his thought is brought under constraint to find the exact thought to be communicated. He will become aware that certain views are not so clear to himself as he had supposed, that finer distinctions must be drawn, that further investigation should be made in

this or that direction. The crude, uncertain idea, "which shape had none," is compelled to take shape and stand forth confessed, or else give place to some other that will. It is said of Charles Kingsley: "He had to a wonderful degree the power of abstraction and concentration, which enabled him to arrange and elaborate a whole sermon, or a chapter of a book, while walking, reading, or even fly-fishing, without making a note, so as to be able on his return to write or dictate it in clear, terse language as fast as pen could move." In this case the writing would seem to have been little more than putting upon paper what had already been fully wrought out in the mind. But in the great majority of cases it is not so. Always there should be first an unaided thinking through; but usually there will be no small amount of additional thinking with the pen. One of the best ways to learn anything is to teach it to somebody: similar is the attempt to write it down.

To be able to think without writing, to be willing to perfect both thought and expression with the pen,—let this vision and revision be our double aim.

4. *Appreciating one's own.* Sometimes in the preparation of a sermon we become quite disheartened at the poor and stale appearance of the product. Perhaps it cost no little effort, and what is it after all? Nothing fresh, strong, attractive in thought or expression, but platitudes only. The temptation arises to throw it all aside; or if it must needs be utilized, we enter the pulpit feeling that the sermon is not fit to be heard. Now the lack of the ideal sermon which the preacher is sighing for is no disqualification to preach; but the lack of interest and confidence in the sermon which he actually has, is a disqualification. It means

feebleness of utterance. Distrust of his weapon will unnerve the soldier's arm.

Stop a moment and consider. Not originality but life and power is the requirement of the pulpit. Your reputation as a speaker or writer must not be jealously thought of. Suppose there should be nothing brilliant in your exegesis: may it not give something of the mind of the Spirit in the text? Suppose your manner of treating the subject is so familiar that the wayfaring man though a fool need not err therein: would you make it so subtle that only select minds can follow the discussion? Suppose your ideas and language are such as people have often heard before: may they not convey a message that people need often to hear again? Suppose there should be some highly gifted man in the congregation who will rate the preaching low: is he the appointed judge? Use with confidence, in the name of the Lord Jesus, that which is in your hand; offer it as your present testimony, though with much trembling, still with boldness and joy. For all its intellectual poverty, it may be a living word of truth.

Is this a plea for indolence and folly? It is a plea for the condemnation of self-ignorance and pride. Do your best always, but dismiss the vain fancy that it must be something extraordinary. Be not oversensitive to the commonplace. Original minds do not strain after originality. Offer to God, for his service in the pulpit, the fruit of an industrious intellect and a faithful will; but whether it be little or much, the source of its real power and effectiveness is deeper than itself; and in the sight of God, with sermons as with men, the first shall sometimes be last and the last first.

5. *Gathering a congregation.* In all probability you

will have one to begin with. But that which is secured by mere official position is not yet truly one's own. The spirit of the true pastor is the spirit of the missionary, whose congregation, whether at home or abroad, is to be formed from the beginning, and built up through his personal ministration. Therefore, how to reach and gain the people is, in all circumstances and situations, the preacher's question. It is not alone the goodly little company that do come to hear us—perhaps through habit or a sense of duty—but the outlying multitude that do not come, for whom we must plan and labor. How may we bring again those that are scattered and ready to perish?

That which is essential we know quite well—to have the true message and the true motive. What we wish to learn is the best means, instruments, auxiliaries. These are more than can be enumerated, and are ever varying to suit the occasion.

Certainly, for one thing, it is expedient not to offend needlessly those who have already come into the congregation, either as regular or transient hearers. Perhaps you have heard young men in the gallery of a church reproved, for some slight misdemeanor, with impatient and cutting words: "If you cannot behave yourselves, you had better stay away." And perhaps you have said within yourself: "Alas! most young men in this community do stay away: where are they at this hour? Shall we drive off, because of occasional thoughtless behavior, the few that do come, when a little kindly skill might make them hearers indeed?"

Much may be done through the coöperation of the church. Let the audience room not be fine or luxurious, gratifying the few, but such as, without offending

good taste, will attract the many—homelike to the poor. Let the church members be attentive with unaffected cordiality to strangers. Let the church be organized as a ministering, and not simply a worshiping or a militant, church, accepting the whole neighborhood as its field and opening the way of everybody to the house of God. Now it is easy enough, as every one knows, to say these things. But are they not the things to be said? Undoubtedly they are the things to be done. Not the clergy, but the whole Church, is the body of Christ, representing him to the world and bidding all men hear his word and enter his kingdom.

The part of the church service that is most frequently used for increasing the number of attendants is the singing. Let us employ the best musical talent, it is often said, in order to draw the people and thus bring them under the influence of the gospel. It might be asked what kind of music it is proposed to give, and the suggestion made that certain sentimental songs are very popular. But the answer would be, Sacred music of course, for no other is appropriate. Is it appropriate, then, to have the words of praise and penitence sung in church as an entertainment, with no devotional thought or purpose in the mind of the performer? or is this a profanation of worship? I cannot believe that Dr. Washington Gladden is unjust in the criticism, that "the musical portion of the service in many American Protestant churches verges close on blasphemy."

When Dr. A. J. Gordon was led to look at his preaching and at the worship and work of his church, as never before, in what seemed to him the clearer light of Christ, he saw among other things that the church music was unchristian. He said to himself: "There is a choir

in yonder gallery employed at an expense of nearly three thousand dollars to sing the praises of God in his church. Some of the members are believers; the larger part make no profession of discipleship, and some are professed disbelievers. But they have fine voices, therefore they are there. . . . There are singers standing above the communion table, leading a divinely appointed ministry of song, yet the question has never been asked whether they have come under the cleansing of the blood of Christ and the renewing of the Holy Spirit —only whether they have fine voices, well-trained and harmonious." Through his influence, congregational singing erelong took the place of the accustomed musical entertainment. What was he,—the victim of an uninstructed conscience, or a true Christian witness?

The attracting power of the undevotional choir, indeed, may not prove to be as great as that of heartfelt congregational song. But even if it should prove greater, shall we do evil that good may come? There is no doubt that thousands were gathered into the Church in the early Christian centuries by its adoption of heathen ideas and rites. It was an attractive and up-to-date method; but the apparent success has shown itself, under the test of the subsequent ages, to be the saddest of failures. Far too dear do we pay for any expedient that violates the laws of the kingdom of God. But within those laws, let the praises of the congregation be guided to their finest and fullest expression.

Not only through his leadership of the church, however, but immediately through his own skilled effort, is the preacher to gain a hearing for his message. Let him quietly determine, in the love of Christ: "Through the coöperation of others, if I can; alone, if I must; but *I*

will be heard." Here a number of questions, small and great, may arise. Shall we advertise our subjects? Shall we employ catchy titles? Shall we deliver illustrated lectures? What place may be given to biographical subjects? to Christian sociology? to current events? To what extent may wit and humor be indulged, or popular fads and follies be hit off? Where shall we preach —in the church only, or also in the private house, the town hall, the market house, the tent, the street? What application to ourselves may be made of the example of Jesus, in choosing temple and synagogue, cottage and highway, seaside and mountain-side, as preaching places? What may we learn from Jesus' healing of sicknesses and diseases, as a means of winning multitudes to wait upon his ministry, and preparing them in some measure to receive his word? It is well that the preacher should ask such questions, and in the light of truth and experience answer them for himself.

At a conference meeting in the congregation of Dr. R. W. Dale, a paper was read that frankly criticised the pastor's sermons as moving on a plane too high for the generality of his hearers. Was the pastor vain or haughty enough to take offense? Standing as he did in the forefront of the Congregational ministry of Great Britain, did he pettishly reply, "My way of preaching is my own; if I do not please you, find some one that will"? On the contrary, he began anew to search his own heart; and these are some of the discoveries which were made, as they appear in the diary that afterwards fell into his biographer's hands: "I do not think that I should state the exact truth, if I said that I was not anxious for the conversion and perfection of individual men, and cared only for setting forth the truth. But I fear that the

truth occupies too large a place in my thought, and that I have been too much occupied with the instrument—the divine instrument—for effecting the ends of the ministry. . . . I have not recognized practically the obligation to use in preaching all those secondary powers which contribute to create and sustain intellectual and emotional interest in preaching. . . . I have a dread of aiming at the 'popular' method of treatment, arising from a dread of aiming at 'popularity,' but the two aims are wholly distinct, and it has been a fault not to aim at the first." A blessing and a boon would it be to every preacher, especially in the earlier years of his ministry, if he might have in his congregation some kindly and competent critic, and be great-minded enough to count him a friend.

Doubtless we shall be called upon to give up personal preferences and tastes; but reverence, truthfulness, moral earnestness, brotherly kindness, are not matters of taste. These are principles, laws of the kingdom of God, and cannot be too sacredly observed. Then, under their authority, let all inventiveness and skill, wit and wisdom, common sense and genius, be brought into play for awakening men's attention to the gospel of Christ. "What marvel," says Wesley, "the devil does not love field preaching? Neither do I. I love a commodious room, a soft cushion, and a handsome pulpit. But where is my zeal, if I do not trample all these under foot, in order to save one more soul?" It might be hard to find any of Wesley's expedients for getting at the people of his day, that did not offend his prejudice or his taste; it would be impossible to find any that violated his conscience.

Let me say this concluding word. Love, which is the

supreme law, is at the same time a spirit of wisdom. Love will instinctively lay hold of expedients that the intellect more slowly discovers and approves. Often is the heart wiser than the head. Its tenderness, its sympathy, its boldness, is the surest possible method of winning and successful speech. This might be proved by observation; but without waiting for any such process of inductive reasoning, the heart has already found its way and touched the goal.

> Ah, how skillful grows the hand
> That obeyeth Love's command!
> It is the heart, and not the brain,
> That to the highest doth attain.

III

The Clearer Vision

What if the preacher, when fairly started in his ministry, should fall into doubt of his vocation? In fact, it is not a rare occurrence. Talking to a friend recently concerning a young pastor in whom we both were interested, I was told, "He is in trouble about his call to preach." Well endowed, well spoken of, conscientious, a Christian from childhood, giving promise of large usefulness, why should his mind be thus disturbed and embarrassed? Embarrassment, indeed, is often but a mild term to apply to so painfully perplexing an experience. Anguish of spirit would be, in some instances, a better word.

The doubt of such a soul may have its source in truth and a good conscience. It may be that he *is* in the wrong calling. A hypocrite or self-seeker? By no means; but a misled Christian. He wished to lead a good and influential life; he was interested in the work of the Church; the time had come to choose a calling; to preach was an attractive idea; it would meet the approval of friends, and rejoice some hearts that were dear to him. The way was open, and he drifted into the pulpit. Now, however, face to face with its realities, his mind changes. But it is a change from darkness to light: he is finding where his place is not, which is a long step toward finding where it is.

The world is wide. The work of God to be done by men is multiform and measureless. If I am released from the pastoral care of a congregation, that is not to be released from the obligation, or denied the opportu-

nity, of lifelong Christian service. Nor is it to have the ideal of service lowered. Whatever work shall be given me—to teach, to buy and sell, to till the ground—surely it may be done gladly as unto the Lord. In the Church, meantime, I will abound in the activities of whatever office I shall be intrusted with. For is not this also a calling from God? His hand is laid upon men as helpers no less than as leaders. "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, *helps, governments*" (1 Cor. xii. 28). Have we not learned that in the New Testament churches no difference was recognized, as to God-given fitness and vocation, between the preacher and any other Christian worker? Whether it were to go as a preaching missionary far away to the Gentiles (Acts xiii. 1-3), or to dispense money to the needy widows of Jerusalem (Acts vi. 1-6), the man was appointed to the office because it was believed that he had already been called of the Spirit. Why should it not be so still?

As to opportunity, more favorable, in at least one great respect, is that of the layman than that of the minister. The layman is unofficial; he does not eat the bread of the Church; the good word that he speaks, the zeal that he shows, cannot be neutralized with the explanation, "It is expected of him, and what he is paid to do." Men will believe in the sincerity of voluntary and unpaid service (1 Cor. ix. 11-15).

But I have not described the most common case of the preacher whose impulse to preach has sickened into irresolution through doubt of his call to this ministry. Commonly, we may believe, the doubt owes its origin not to truth, but to some weakness or error: it is

what Bunyan would have called one of his "fainting fits." The man is in his divinely appointed place, and needs only to see it clearly as such, and rise up with a brave and believing heart to meet its demands. Few would call in question Frederick Robertson's inward vocation to the Christian ministry; and yet there were times when he himself questioned it, and imagined that he would have made a better soldier than preacher. "You can have little idea," he writes, shortly after ordination, "of the temptations in the ministry to despond and let the hands hang down, and the many hours of doubt and difficulty that come upon the soul. And if to these were added the uncertainty, whether the position itself were one in which we had placed ourselves without God's direction, they would be indeed intolerable." But even the intolerable addition of that "uncertainty" he did not always escape. It was the morbid fancy of a sensitive spirit, outwardly harassed and inwardly overwrought.

This unwarranted misgiving may be due to one or more of various causes. It may be caused by a deeper misgiving—by a wavering of one's hold upon the Christian revelation. Suppose that Job had been under appointment to preach when overtaken by the awful trial of his faith and unable to find his way to God: "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him." His good time was in the past; his better time was yet to come; in the present transition period, till he could say with a depth of conviction that his earlier days had never known, "Now mine eye seeth Thee," all that he seemed capable of was to think, and struggle in prayer, and wait for the Lord as they that watch for the morning.

But it is more likely that the young theologian, not doubting fundamental truth, has identified some human opinion or ecclesiastical dogma with the essential truth of redemption, and when he finds that opinion or dogma slipping away from him, it is as if the very word of God were departing out of his heart and his mouth. It may have been his belief, for example, that men are either unconditionally elected to everlasting life, or left without a possibility of attaining it—that atonement has been made in behalf of the elect only, and hence no others can answer the call to repentance. So has he held and taught, according to accepted doctrinal symbols. At the same time, he feels constrained to offer salvation to all and put the responsibility of refusal upon each man's conscience, as if by the grace of God each might accept if he would. But now he finds the two doctrines in combination unpreachable; he tries to set them forth together—must he not declare the whole counsel of God?—but the words stick in his throat or faint upon his lips. Yet he is unable to adjust his thinking to any other construction of biblical teaching. What must he do? Dr. John M. Mason, of New York, a greatly admired preacher in his day, acknowledged that, on account of this antagonism between creed and pulpit, "a revival of religion was a sorrow to him." Why may not the same antagonism prove an embarrassment at any time in an evangelical ministry? Dr. Henry Van Dyke tells of the great peace and comfort that he found, "after years of doubt and inward conflict," in the unreserved acceptance of Jesus' teaching as to the freeness of the gospel: "Nothing has been more effective," he thinks, "in begetting and increasing doubts than the idea that Christian doctrine required us to be-

lieve that all events, good and evil, were foreordained by God, and that some men were eternally chosen to be saved, without regard to their faith or works, while the rest were left to inevitable destruction." ("The Gospel for an Age of Doubt," p. 23.)

Again, it may be that the preacher has always believed that the Bible, whose truths he is appointed to preach, was given to the world through a strictly verbal inspiration—every syllable spoken as it were articulately from the mouth of God. That belief has departed from him, and he knows no other satisfactory idea of Scripture inspiration to put in its place. How, then, he asks, can I preach, thus enmeshed in doubt? He would be glad of some other occupation, feeling ill adapted to his own.

Or it may be a case of spiritual declension. The inner light burns low. The moral reputation, indeed, is not yet impaired; religiousness remains; but spirituality is failing. The kingdom of heaven hardly seems a reality, while the flesh and the world are present and powerful. "Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" What wonder if in the gathering darkness the path of personal Christian service should grow dim?

Or, perhaps, the spiritual experience has never been full and satisfactory. The preacher has not yet been made free under the law of love, the law of the spirit of sonship in Christ Jesus.

Or, again, the blurred vision may be produced by a feeling of timidity, on the part of the inexperienced preacher, in the actual presence of his ministry. The greatness and difficulty of the work are daily becoming more apparent. Heretofore it has appeared to him perhaps as a pleasant pathway over a fruitful plain—

this way of the preacher. Now it confronts him as a pathless mountain; and unlike Prince Zerubbabel, in the restoration of the Holy City, he is met by no prophet with the imperial word, "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." Rather is he reminded of Christian, who at the outset of his pilgrimage, finding himself under the shadow of Sinai, "was afraid to venture farther, lest the hill should fall on his head; wherefore there he stood still and wotted not what to do."

Infirmities compass him about. Standing before a congregation, he is beset with all the faults of his nature and character. Pride, unholy ambition, weakness of the will, irritability, a wandering mind, self-seeking, all seem to concentrate and appear in the act of speech. He knows himself, as never before, to be "a man of unclean lips." Yet he has undertaken to be a spokesman for the Lord God and his Christ. And then, the care of individual souls—to enter into each one's life, to touch his inmost spirit, to warn, to guide, to comfort,—how can he fulfill such a ministry? So the helper of others is himself without strength, and his soul is cast down within him. Then he asks in sore trouble, "Is this, in very truth, the appointed place for such as I?" On the way to my first field of labor, a friend at my side remarked, "You will not continue in the ministry if you are not called." But he was speaking in an unknown tongue. "What do you mean?" said I. The work in prospect looked so interesting and delightful that one might easily be tempted, I thought, to continue in it, whether truly called of God or not. A few years' experience wrote out in quite legible characters the interpretation of the wise predictive word.

Into every life come the dark hours, and this is one of them. A soul is under terrible temptation. A great and effectual door that has opened to a Christian evangelist threatens to shut forever against him. He may forsake the ministry for which he has been apprehended of the Lord Jesus Christ. He may be enticed into some change of church relations that promises to make his life less spiritually strenuous, and more priestly or professional—easily embracing the new views that lead toward his heart's desire. Or he may fall into professionalism without making any ecclesiastical change. Then gradually yet rapidly the law of habit will fix him in the routine of half-hearted service; and the gleam of celestial splendor which at one time disturbed him "with the joy of elevated thoughts" will have faded into the light of common day.

The true solution of the problem is to be found in the sanctuary of the Divine Presence. Not in a less ingenuous spirit, not in an easy-going life and a weariness of endless high endeavor; but in simplicity, and aspiration, and incessant prayer, and self-abandoning trust, the soul entering into the light of God and dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. It is our deepest need—the vision of God. This is the Light of all our seeing; and when the heart is disenchanted of the earthly vision, this alone can make us truehearted and buoyant and strong in the higher life of the spirit. It is a need that every earnest soul must feel. Why should we be surprised that when the poet Tennyson was asked what was his dearest object in life, he replied, "My greatest wish is to have a clearer vision of God"? Is it a ministerial, or an artistic, or a professional need? Only because it is, first of all, an imperative *human* need: "Tell me, I be-

seech Thee, Thy name"; "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him"; "Thy face, Lord, will I seek, hide not thy face from me"; "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." The Christian preacher, in time of crisis or confusion, will say unto his soul, "Wait thou continually upon God, for my expectation is from him." Was it not in the light of God shining upon us, at the first—

> Not of the sunlight,
> Not of the moonlight,
> Not of the starlight—

that we humbly rejoiced to see our own particular path of lifelong service? We may have that light again, and more abundantly. Our vocation may be renewed and confirmed, and our hearts kept in the peace and joy of the Lord.

Why not? It is God's way. There is a whole heaven of truth ready to be revealed to him that is ready to receive it. Jesus spoke of it when he said, at the end of three years' training of the Twelve, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Not long afterwards—if the time be reckoned by days and weeks—waiting upon God in the Upper Room, on the day of Pentecost, they learned some of these other things which could not have been communicated before. What a revelation of the mystery of redemption it was! Still, not final or complete. The man who rose up among his brethren, under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit, that day, and declared the gospel of the saving Name to all the people, did not then see his whole way clear as a preacher of the gospel. He had yet to be taught, by word and vision (Acts x.), that the Gentiles were fellow-heirs with the children of the ancient covenant, and equal partakers of the grace of life. So the

unseen hand of the Saviour led him to more than one mount of vision, and sent him forth with a message that was both new and eternal. Shall it not be so still? (Isa. xxx. 26.)

Indeed, it has been so, as many notable instances testify, from the beginning until now.

In the early part of the seventeenth century, when the pulpit of Germany had lost its power, and the churches were cold and distracted, an intellectually gifted young man, August Hermann Francke, took upon him the ministerial office. He was a most diligent student, especially of the Hebrew Bible. One day, while writing a sermon on the text, "Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John xx. 21), the feeling awoke in his heart, "I have never heard those words or received such a commission." He had been merely a professional student and teacher, not consciously a man sent forth from Christ with a living truth. Did he nevertheless go on after the old manner, studying the original Scriptures, discharging his official duties, and drawing his stipend? Or did he with a failing faith seek some other occupation? Neither the one nor the other. As an unworthy sinner at the cross, he sought the face of God, and it shone upon him with such light and power as left no doubt of what his work should be. "Thenceforward," he tells us, "I was in earnest for God, and willing to suffer all for his sake." Both university professor and city preacher, he ministered in crowded classrooms and crowded churches. The University of Halle became through his influence the great school of the prophets of the evangelic faith in Germany: from eight hundred to a thousand students annually gathered in its halls. In the same city he

founded the famous Orphan Asylum, and a publishing house for the dissemination of Christian literature, which are even to this day flourishing establishments. "One is tempted," says a recent visitor to Halle, "very seriously and literally to ask who has left a more enviable name in the world than Francke." Far and wide his beneficent work has extended; and the starting point of it all was that hour of visitation from the living God in the early days of his ministry, to which he always looked back as "the birth-time of his soul."

John Wesley was ordained a deacon in the Church of England on the 19th of September, 1725. For twelve years he performed the duties of his office with unstinted diligence and self-sacrifice, but with meager results. If ever man did, Wesley walked in the fear of God. But that was all: he was only a bond-servant, not yet consciously a son of the heavenly Father. After a time he began to feel this lack of Christian assurance keenly, distressfully, and with it a lack of fitness to preach the way of salvation. Suppose this man to have then said within himself, "I am no better than the other clergy of the Anglican Church—no better than my own venerated father; I will be appointed to a living, I will have me a home, I will faithfully teach my parishioners the practice of piety; and I will rid my mind of these mystic notions of conscious acceptance with God and experiential preaching": how different would have been the subsequent history of English Christianity. But Wesley sought until he found his personal peace and with it his ministerial message, in the forgiving love of God in Jesus Christ: "An assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death; and I then testified openly to all

there what I now first felt in my heart." Thenceforth, for nearly half a century of unexampled labor and success, he continued to testify the same gospel of the grace of God.

Philip William Otterbein, after preaching a sermon on repentance and faith, in his earlier ministry, was asked by an awakened hearer for some word of counsel and comfort. Otterbein had already been a Christian minister for four or five years; but when thus brought face to face with a spiritually troubled soul, he somehow felt himself to be a blind leader of the blind. "My friend, advice is scarce with me to-day," was the only word he could offer. Himself awakened to a painful sense of spiritual ignorance, he found the way to God, and was made glad in the personal consciousness of the Divine love. Not all at once, however, was the new life of sonship and service realized. For when, in old age, he was asked by Francis Asbury, "By what means were you brought to the gospel of God and our Saviour?" he replied—question and answer being carefully written down—"By degrees was I brought to the knowledge of the truth while in Lancaster." Here, then, was the time and the manner of inner illumination in this man's life that prepared him for the work of the next sixty years, as a mighty Christian evangelist and founder of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

Very suggestive is the case of Thomas Chalmers. At the age of fifteen he became a divinity student, and at nineteen received license to preach. During the greater part of his first pastorate—at Kilmany—he was very much of a mathematician and orator, and very little of a preacher. A large portion of his time was occupied in teaching at the neighboring University of St. Andrews;

and it seemed to be his ambition to fill a professor's chair. According to the view that he then held of pastoral duty and opportunity, there was ample time for this outside work and perfect liberty to do it. Hear his defense in a pamphlet published at that time: "The author of this pamphlet can assert, from what to him is the highest of all authority, the authority of his own experience, that, after the satisfactory discharge of his parish duties, a minister may enjoy five days in the week of uninterrupted leisure for the prosecution of any science in which his taste may dispose him to engage. . . . There is almost no consumption of intellectual effort in the peculiar employment of a minister. . . . It is his to impress the simple and home-bred lessons of humanity and justice, and the exercises of a sober and enlightened piety." So it was with the gifted young Moderate minister for about eight years; and then all was changed. Through an attack of sickness and the reading of certain heart-searching books, he was led closer to God, and received such a revelation of love and mercy in Christ as had never been given him before. A new man, he became a new preacher. Abundant fruit of his labors now for the first time appeared. It was henceforth his supreme purpose and unfailing joy to publish the gospel, to care for the poor, to extend the work of Christians missions, and to train young men for an evangelical ministry. The whole after life of the great Christian orator was illumined and empowered by the clearer vision of God that came to him in the parish of Kilmany.

Horace Bushnell, theological thinker and preacher, at nearly fifty years of age, was brought into an experience which he described at the time in a single word, when,

being asked what he had seen, he replied, "The gospel." Twenty-three years afterwards, in reply to a question, he described it more fully: "I seemed to pass a boundary. I had never been very legal in my Christian life, but now I passed from these partial seeings, glimpses, and doubts into a clearer knowledge of God and into his inspirations, which I have never wholly lost. The change was into faith—a sense of the freeness of God and the ease of approach to him." "I used to know Dr. Bushnell in days gone by," said a brother minister, "but there came a time when there was a vastly added power, a going down into deeper depths, and a going up into higher heights, and a bringing forth of richer spiritual meanings." After his death, the person who knew better than any one else on earth his inner and daily life, said: "The greatness of this change and its profound reality made him a new man, or rather the same man with a heavenly investiture."

Shall I cite the example of Dwight L. Moody, whose wonderful evangelistic work is so familiar to us all? Listen to his own story:

> There came a great hunger into my soul. I did not know what it was. I began to cry as I never did before. The hunger increased. I was crying all the time that God would fill me with his Spirit. Well, one day in the city of New York—oh, what a day! I cannot describe it; I seldom refer to it; it is almost too sacred an experience to name. Paul had an experience of which he never spoke for fourteen years. I can only say God then revealed himself to me, and I had such an experience of his love that I had to ask him to stay his hand. I went to preaching again. The sermons were not different; I did not present any new truths; and yet hundreds were converted.

Now these men were, in many respects, remarkably different from one another. I have purposely taken

them as examples from a wide field of Christian thought and activity. But there was one great experience common to them all: whether of the past or of the present, whether scholarly or uneducated, whether Pietist, Methodist, Reformed, Presbyterian, or Congregationalist, they found not some truth about God but God himself, and in such holy and endearing relationship as to impart a distinctly new power to their life and ministry. Shall we expect for ourselves just such an experience as came to any of them? On the contrary, ours will differ from every other. To fix beforehand the circumstances and forms in which the coveted vision of God will be given, is to make sure of disappointment. The manner of his coming cannot be foreseen. Temperament, habit of thought, outward situation will condition the manner of the Divine revelation in our lives. There may be, as in the foregoing examples, some clearly marked experience, standing apart from all others, which we shall look upon as a new beginning; or it may be by slower advances, and through many successive days, that we are led into the larger knowledge of God. Often will the light from heaven fall upon our way when we are not directly seeking it, but are busy helping our neighbor in Christ's name. Service illumines.

Take the life of that notable genius of the pulpit, Phillips Brooks, as an example. At the time of entering the seminary as a theological student, he was not even a communicant in the Church. But the next year was to the young seeker after God a year of spiritual light and enlargement; and from that time forth his inner life seems to have been a process of growth, with here and there a consciously higher stage, all the way unto the end. A short time before his death, touched

by the request of a young minister to tell the secret of his life, he broke the seal of habitual reticence concerning personal experiences, and wrote:

The more I have thought it over, the less in some sense I have seemed to have to say. And yet the more sure it has seemed to me that these last years have had a peace and fullness which there did not use to be. . . . I am sure that it is a deeper knowledge and truer love of Christ. . . . It cannot come by one flash of light, or one great convulsive event. It comes without haste and without rest in this perpetual living of our life with him. . . . He is here. He knows me and I know him. It is no figure of speech. It is the realest thing in the world. . . . There is such a thing as putting ourselves in the way of God's overflowing love and letting it break upon us till the response of love to him comes, not by struggle, not even by deliberation, but by necessity, as the echo comes when the sound strikes the rock.

What kind of being is God? in what relation to men has it pleased him to make himself known? The Cause of all that is, the Authority under whom the moral life is lived; but also the heavenly Friend with whom we may enter into communion. Therefore, when questionings arise and it is hard to determine what is right and best, let us flee not away from God, but toward him.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him
For the health of his countenance. . . .
And in the night his song shall be with me,
Even a prayer unto the God of my life."
(Psa. xlii. 5, 8.)

Indeed, it is He that has already found us and laid his hand upon us, that we may yield ourselves entirely to him who is the Truth, and look upon his face. What kind of being is God? He sent his own Son into the

world to answer the question, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Let us know Jesus, for God is like him. Let us look up into the face of Jesus, for it is the face of God. In Jesus, in his words and work and life, above all in his cross, may be seen, not once or twice but evermore, the clearer vision of the Father. We have traced the way of the preacher in various circumstances and directions, but there is one word that tells the whole story: alike in the inner chamber and before the congregation, Christ is the Way.

CONCLUSION

The Martyrdom of the Strong

I have no additional truth to tell. Nor do I propose to make a résumé of the topics that have offered themselves, one after another, for our consideration. But the heart sometimes lingers, after the work of reasoning or instruction is done, loath to turn away, intent upon having the last word. The Christian preacher's life as tending toward the pulpit and finding its distinctive expression there, has passed before us. May we not, in closing, ask with a somewhat more appreciative mind, What is the meaning and end of it all?

The answer will be found by following this way of life back to its beginning. It is the same that was foreshown at the first. A ruling motive is prophetic—indicating the direction and end of conduct. Now it is a Christian life that we have followed. Its ruling motive is that love which Jesus both taught and perfectly exemplified, and which conscience enforces as the fulfilling of the moral law. So, while thoroughly human, it is the heavenly life. It is an answer, God's answer and our own, to the prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Death, so far from interrupting its course, will set it free from earthly limitations. Into no ghostly underworld—Sheol the Empty and the Craving—where "the light itself is darkness," as in a troubled dream, does He who is the Resurrection and the Life lead His followers. Not unto emptying, but unto endless fulfillment. Here is the dimness, the dream, the

troubled sleep: there, the awaking, the reality, with closest spiritual companionship, and progress toward ideal perfection, and enduring life. (Job x. 21, 22; Psa. lxxxviii. 10-12; Psa. xvi. 10, 11; Isa. xxvi. 19; 2 Cor. v. 1-8.)

We have learned that the beginning of such a life and the secret of its power is in the cross of Christ. For the cross does not simply mean submission. It means life through death; its law, "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." We give up ourselves not that we may become nothing and do nothing, but that we may pass into the larger life of spiritual regeneration. "For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God." Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfill. He destroys nothing but destruction itself, nothing but sin and death. "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."

There was a time—in the second and third centuries—when it was not uncommon for Christians to crave the death-stroke of persecution. "Christian subjects in those days," says Jerome in his "Life of Paul the First Hermit," "longed to be smitten with the sword for the name of Christ." Life was hard, the world corrupt; it was an evil time. The end of all things might be very near. Just beyond the gate of death was the kingdom of eternal glory. It was a rapturous thought, to die for Christ. Brief pain and anguish, then the martyr's crown. Not death but life, with its labor and suffering, its uncertainty and struggle, was to be dreaded. There fell a voice as of ascended and glorified men, who had overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and through the word of their testimony, and had not loved their lives even unto death (Rev. xii. 11), telling of a bliss now

realized that made the direst tragedy of preliminary pain unworthy of a thought or a fear:

> I was some time in being burned,
> But at the close a Hand came through
> The fire above my head, and drew
> My soul to Christ, whom now I see.

In other cases, this morbid longing for separation from the world and distinction in virtue led to the solitary life. The motive was the same. Indeed, the monk Antony, when he saw the martyrs brought to Alexandria, "longed to be a martyr himself," and "was like one grieved because he had not borne witness." Not only was the world corrupt, but the Church had become sacerdotal and secularized. The surest way to heaven seemed to lie either through the amphitheater or the wilderness. Even the sacred institution of the family was renounced for the vows of poverty and celibacy. In the course of time, indeed, many of these runaways from life's common duties went forth with passionate energy as preachers and missionaries, and many became the most eminent ecclesiastics of their time. But the original motive of monasticism was not the defense and extension of the Catholic Church, or the Christian conquest of the world; it was the escape of the devotees themselves from both the Church and the world.

In less tragic or pronounced forms, this same spirit appears in the circumstances of our own time. There is a halfway goodness. There is a pious indolence. There is a martyrdom of the weak. There is a willingness to be found "doing no harm," rather than "doing good of every possible sort, and as far as possible, to all men." Is this to follow Jesus? It is well to keep the

body under, to correct the folly of intellectual pride, to shun the way of the transgressor: it is absolutely necessary to Christian discipleship. But still the question remains, What am I doing with my life? The same inspired teacher who says, "If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin," beseeches us to present our "bodies a *living* sacrifice." If mine be indeed a surrendered life, the Christ to whom it has been devoted will give it back renewed and empowered for service. Religion is not insipidity—"have salt in yourselves"; and just as little is it fussiness or schism—"and be at peace with one another" (Mark ix. 50).

"It is an evil world," says the negative Christian preacher; "I have laid down my ambitions at the cross of Christ; I have given all to him"; and he lets the civil government, and society, and education, and current literature, and even the large enterprises of the Church—he lets them go as they will. The study of books, the solution of present-day questions, the application of the word of the Son of Man to every man and to every interest of men, the work, work, *work* of the pulpit and pastorate, is left chiefly to others. He likes the Church, because it has shielded him from much harm, furnished him with religious surroundings, and shown him the way to heaven. Does he love it? Doubtless he wishes it well; but goodwill, let us remember, is good *will*. "I would not live alway," sighed the broken-spirited patriarch; "Always abounding in the work of the Lord," said the indomitable and faith-illumined apostle.

Nothing, indeed, is better than "the martyr's crown." For what can be better than eternal life? But a martyr —as the word itself testifies—is a witness. The manner of death by which it is given him to glorify God, is

only incidental. If he have the spirit of a sound mind, he would fain be delivered from evil men, and asks the prayers of his Christian brethren that it may be so; but whatever the consequences, his testimony, in word and deed, must be borne. He will give his body to be burned, if need be; but his underlying principle of action is, "As always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or death."

Hugh Latimer, for example, was called to die for the testimony of Jesus. What manner of man he was we know quite well. Preëminently a preacher—outspoken, quaint, illustrative, anecdotal, sometimes humorous, always intensely earnest and practical—he could catch the ear and stir the heart of a congregation as could no one else of his day. Most heartily did he believe in the spoken word. When a bishop, it was one of his injunctions to the curates of his diocese, "that preaching be not set aside for any manner of observance in the Church, as procession, or other ceremonies." As for himself, his popularity was not purchased at the cost of fidelity or real power. The audiences that hung upon his lips felt the presence of an honest and kindly nature, a lover of Christ and the common people; but what they heard was the plainest possible truth. Whether in city or country, before king or people, he was equally unsparing in condemnation of the gross errors and vices of the time. It was said, "If England ever had a prophet, he was one." As he grew old, his doctrine became purer and his sermons more powerful. But the eloquent and plain-spoken preacher was brought to trial for heresy. In the closing words of his defense, he declared: "I assure you if I could grant to the Queen's proceedings, I would rather live than die; but seeing they be directly

against God's word, I will obey God more than man, and so embrace the stake." And so he did; for, on the 16th day of October, 1555, the old man was chained to a stake, in front of Balliol College, Oxford, and burned to death.

On the other hand, John Wyclif died at his home, surrounded by friends, and was buried under the choir of his own parish church. A parish priest, he was more truly a prophet-preacher. Summoned before synod and convocation to answer the charge of heresy, he went on faithfully to expose the corrruptions and abuses of the Church. But Wyclif's chief work was constructive. He longed to make the word of God known to men of every rank and condition. Therefore we see him sending out his Bible-readers and preachers. Therefore he also set his hand to the translation of the Scriptures. "O Christ, thy law is hidden in the sepulcher; when wilt thou send thine angel to remove the stone, and show thy truth unto thy flock?"—that was his prayer. At the end of twenty-eight years of patient waiting and enthusiastic diligence, the prayer was answered, the work of translation was completed. For the first time the whole Bible now appeared in the language of the English people; and though the Church volleyed and thundered against this unauthorized and dangerous production, it was widely distributed and read. In continual peril of his life, Wyclif never abated by one jot his evangelic activity and zeal. But somehow in the good providence of God he was not even made a prisoner for Jesus' sake. It was not till forty years after his death that the bones of the condemned heretic were burned, and his ashes thrown to the waves. Was he, therefore, any the less truly a witness of Christ?

Richmond Nolley, a saintly young pioneer preacher,

making the attempt to reach the field of labor to which he had been appointed, lay down upon the wet leaves of a Southern swamp, without the ministry of a human hand or voice, and died for his Lord; William McKendree, after passing through privations and perils innumerable, fell asleep in an honored old age with his triumphant "All is well," in the midst of the friends that loved him best. Both were faithful and true witnesses even unto death.

Or, if you please, let us take an example very different from any of these. Consider such a life as that of Henry Drummond. It stands out distinctly, alike in its limitations and its peculiar excellences, under the white light of to-day. Drummond was not an ordained minister of the gospel. He had no special capacity for philosophic thought. He was not an orator. He was not an authority in any branch of learning. He was, indeed, one of the most gifted and lovable of men. Of poetic temperament, impressible, responsive, eager alike to gain and to share, "with a nameless radiance as of the springtime ever about him," he was able so to speak as to make anybody listen, and so to write as to touch the imagination and heart of any reader.

But it was none of these things, nor all of them combined, that made him the man he was. Early in life he had laid hold of that truth of truths—a hard saying, verily, to those who cannot hear it—which he afterwards told and retold, in his own lucid forms of speech, to other young people: "To be like Christ is the only thing in the world worth caring for, the thing before which every ambition of man is folly, and all lower achievement vain." That truth Henry Drummond knew and lived. So that very many of those with whom, in free-spoken

intimacy, his life was spent, were ready to say, as did the great evangelist with whom he was so closely associated in love and labor: "Never have I known a man who, in my opinion, lived nearer the Master or sought to do his will more fully." His life was an unceasing service to men. It would have been easy for him to make a fortune; but he turned away from any such thought without the slightest apparent struggle, when it would interfere with his unpaid services in the congregation and the inquiry room. Brimful of the natural enjoyment of life, he commended the religion of Christ—the heart of all his joys—to every one whom it was given him to influence. A professor of natural science, he saw in nature a sacrament of spiritual truth. An evangelist, a confessor and guide to troubled souls, a religious leader of students and boys, he was himself a great warm-hearted boy all his days.

Drummond's was a singularly happy life. Both the good and the best things fell to his lot in large measure. He was not tried by extraordinary conflict and suffering. From the more dangerous experience of sudden popularity and dazzling success, he came forth unspoiled. It was at the high-noon of life that his sun went down. Near the playground of his boyhood, on the Castle Rock in the old town of Stirling, amid the scenes that he most loved, his body was laid to rest, while a multitude of grateful and sorrowing friends, at home and abroad, thanked God that they had ever known so beautiful a soul. Were this life and death, therefore, not also a martyrdom for Christ?

In a word, Christian *self-renunciation* must pass into *self-realization,* which will be expressed in *service.* Is this a somewhat less rigorous and imperative idea of

self-renunciation? On the contrary, it is simply the complete idea. It calls for the utter overthrow of selfishness, as the condition of the true life of the self.

Note its comprehensiveness. Certainly it includes the turning away from all sin. Just as certainly it includes the spirit of unhesitating submission to the allotments of the Divine Will, be they pleasant or painful: the spirit of a Luther—"It is not for me to say whether my life or my death will best serve the gospel and the public weal"; the spirit of a Baxter—

> If life be long, I will be glad
> That I may long obey;
> If short, yet why should I be sad
> To soar to endless day?

the spirit of the French martyrs, under the fierce edicts of Francis I., "going to their death singing psalms, and with no other cry than, *Christ, the Saviour.*"

Still further, the true Christian self-renunciation includes the refusal of what is good and lawful in itself, when this would conflict with the particular calling which we have from God. Surely it is not wrong, for example, that a man should seek a home in the country, and lead a quiet life among his neighbors, far from babbling tongues and all the glitter and glare of a public career. "I will return to my peaceful mathematics," said a scholar, tired of the noisy swirl of political life into which he had been enticed from his books and studies. That is well enough, we are ready to say, let him follow whichever mode of life is the more agreeable to his tastes. But suppose a man should be conscious of a call from God to one or the other career: he must follow that, whatever be his tastes. The restored demoniac of Gadara besought Jesus that he might be with him;

he would have joined the glorious company of the apostles. But Jesus said, "Return to thy house, and declare how great things God hath done for thee." Many a young man is ready to give up his present home and its duties for a wider sphere, to whom the word of the Master is still, "Return to thy house." He would devote his whole time to the work of the Church; he would stand before congregations as a minister of the word. But he may not. His duty is otherwhere. Everybody else can see it, while he perhaps cannot. Bright dreams of unsecular and official Christian service are dazzling his eyes. Yet if he be faithful, both light and strength will be given, and he will go home to find his joy in the less conspicuous but no less honorable sphere to which he is called.

On the other hand, suppose the voice of God be heard in a man's inmost soul, "I will send thee far hence unto the people." He may enjoy retirement as much as did Gregory Nazianzen, the eloquent bishop of Constantinople, who "neighed like an imprisoned horse for his green pastures of study and leisure"; or as did Jerome in his convent in the Holy Land, who said, "To me the town is a prison, and solitude is paradise": nevertheless he must go. "Far hence"—possibly to the ends of the earth; but he must go. Otherwise not Christ but self is in the ascendency. The same motive that has prompted him to renounce the vain pomp and glory of the world, and to submit without a murmur to sharp affliction, will inspire him now to forego that which is beautiful and good. Because not to do so would be to him insubmission and sin.

Many times doubtless we misjudge the motives of those who are set in the high places of authority and

honor. May they not have gained their positions through self-seeking? Certainly; it has often been done; but the love that thinketh no evil is wiser than the meanness of suspicion, and will see, in many a mighty leader of the Christian host, a man who shrank as timidly as Moses, happy in his obscure shepherd-life, or as Jeremiah, trembling and protesting like a frightened child, from absorption in practical and public affairs.

Did stern John Calvin choose for himself the publicity of ecclesiastical leadership? It was quite otherwise. "Being of a shy and solitary nature," he says, "I have always loved retirement and tranquillity. . . . In short, although it has always been my chief desire to live in private without being known, yet God has led me hither and thither, and turned me in so many directions by different changes, that he never left me at peace in any place, until, in spite of my own desires, he made me come forward, and brought me into public life." A fugitive for conscience' sake from his native land, he stopped one summer evening in Geneva, to spend the night only. The time was ripe for the organization and development of the Protestant Church in the city. He was urged to remain and undertake the task. He must be the organizer and ruler. But it was far from his thought. He was seeking a tranquil refuge where he could pursue his theological studies undisturbed. Yet he yielded personal taste and preference to what, under the powerful persuasion that was brought to bear upon him, seemed to be for the greater glory of God; and there the "shy and solitary" student remained, save during three years of banishment, for the rest of his life, preaching, lecturing to thousands of students, administering government, and making the city a bulwark and

training school of the Reformed Church of Europe. It was not Calvin's choice, except as he had chosen in all things the sovereign will of God.

Here, then, is the larger proof of Christian self-denial —to renounce not only that which is morally evil, but also that which in itself is good, when it would conflict with our special duty and mission.

The result is *self-realization.* Not loss, but immeasurable gain; not emaciation, either in body or spirit, but nurture; not death, but life. Self-renunciation may seem, indeed, to merge the individual life into that of Another: "I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." Nevertheless it is true that no man has ever shown a keener sense of his own personality than the man who made this and many similar confessions of oneness with Christ. Slavery, to be sure, is a low, imperfect condition of life,—"If thou canst become free, use it rather,"—because it is not the law of our nature that we should be absolutely subjected to the will of a fellow-being. But it is the law of our nature, the end and aim of our being, that in all things we should do the will of God. Hence it is only when we do homage (when we say, *I am thy man*) to God, when we become God's men, that we truly become ourselves.

Let us think it distinctly. Here am I. A few years ago I was not. God is my Maker. I cannot cause one nerve to vibrate, nor one moment of time to come and go. My power to know, to love, to will, to grow, to live, is all from him, the ever-living and ever-present God. What reference, then, should I have to him in the conduct of life? Surely the supreme reference. It is reasonable and right that I should put none of his gifts in the place of himself. Let me, then, live this life for

which I was intended and created—for which I was reconciled to God through the blood of the cross. The result must be the fulfillment in myself of God's creative idea. I must be in the way to realize personally all that a man is capable of becoming.

Exceptional gifts or circumstances are not required. Here is an illusion of which we need to be reminded again and again. Thinking, for example, of such a man as the Apostle to the Gentiles, we imagine him always in some tragic situation or performing some brilliant deed,—stricken to the ground by a light from heaven, standing in the midst of the Athenian court preaching Jesus and the Resurrection, shipwrecked in the Mediterranean, making his defense before Nero. But the reality was very different. There was much in Paul's life that we should have regarded as entirely commonplace and unattractive. Had we seen him trudging along the road, plainly clad, covered with dust, bent with feebleness, we should not have cared to look a second time. Had we seen the table at which he ate and the room in which he slept, they would have seemed plain and poor. Had we seen him working in Corinth, month after month, at his coarse tent-cloth, it would not have looked in the least romantic. The secret of the glory of Paul's life was the Christian motive by which he was inspired at all times and in everything. It was this that turned the clay into porcelain, and made his character resplendent. We shall always find it so: not the possession of extraordinary powers in extraordinary circumstances makes any man great, but faithfulness in the use of his own powers in his own circumstances, whatever these may be. Not eloquence, but conscientiousness. Not the position, but the motive. Not gifts, even prophecy itself, but immortal

"faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

With sun-bright evidence does this truth appear in the life of our Lord. Was not he the Divine Man, the glorious Leader of our race? Yet he said, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." Therefore, he also declares that in becoming doers of God's will, we are made one with him: "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." Moreover, in Jesus the deeper truth appears that this absolute obedience is the service not of a slave but of a son. It is in the law of liberty. To be a son of God, growing into the likeness of Christ, advancing toward perfection even as our Father in heaven is perfect,—such is the self-fulfillment that comes through the renunciation of self (Matt. xvi. 25).

Together with this fulfillment of the true self will appear its expression in *service*. It must be so. Men work, we are told, that they may eat: self-preservation is a law of nature. But so likewise are parenthood and brotherhood. Hunger is the spur of labor; but many and great are the labors of love. There is a social self. "We were well pleased to impart unto you," says Paul to the Thessalonians, "not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were become very dear to us" (1 Thess. ii. 8). The monument of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, in Westminster Abbey, bears the two words that represent one of the truest human lives that have ever blessed the world: "Love, Serve."

Service, indeed, is as much a promoter as an expression of the true life within. In no other way than by doing good can we ourselves be perfected in goodness.

This is why we feel at once the inadequacy of such ideas as self-culture, self-improvement, being good to oneself. Excellent in themselves, if put forth as final or complete they are dead being alone. Let them flower and fruit into the Christian idea of love and service. Even had we power to make the most of ourselves without offering help to others, this would not lessen their claim; but that power has not been given us. Equally impossible is it to enrich one's own life without receiving ten thousand ministrations from others, and to attain such an end without becoming in our turn willing ministers to others. Give, not for the sake of getting again; give in love, which is its own reward; and you will nevertheless get another reward in the sweetening and deepening of your own spiritual life. Finding our brother, we find our truer self.

> Love that bent low beneath his brother's burden,
> How shall he soar and find all sorrows flown!
> Love that ne'er asked for answer or for guerdon,
> How shall he meet eyes sweeter than his own!

Nor can any of us complain that he lacks the opportunity of service. What more undeniable facts of the world in which we live than its need, and its susceptibility to improvement? The earth may be changed from a barren rock into a garden, from a forest into a farm, from a swamp into a city. But the earth is a type of the human world. The physical is a prelude to the spiritual. The highest field of life and labor—and the hardest, as well—is man. "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel." "The field is the world." Here are souls. The meaning and solemnity of the life that God has given them is beyond all estimation. They are intended for heirs of eternity, though

many have not yet truly known their birthright. It may be lost or bartered away. They are awake in righteousness or asleep in sin. They cannot be saved, they cannot be nurtured or educated, without both Divine grace and human ministries.

As to the Christian preacher, his opportunity is incomparable. He is relieved of the common round of business cares and employments, that his whole time may be devoted to the direct service of the soul. Even in the Church he is not called upon to serve tables. Other men are set apart to administer the temporal economy of the Lord's house, that he may have the more time and strength to meditate, to pray, to search the Scriptures, to shepherd the flock of Christ, to set forth the gospel of redeeming love. What a vocation! What a way of life! Whenever he is permitted to preach, what an opportunity!

> Give me, O gracious Master, power
> To read the signs and seize the hour,
> Nor let these people empty go
> Because I may so little know.
>
> Give me Thy message now; not mine
> The words they need, but only Thine;
> O Lord, these people wait for Thee,
> *Thine* is this opportunity.

Are we ready to preach? to touch the lives about us with the searching and healing light of Christ? to reason of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, to do the work of an evangelist, to answer the appeal of the feeblest struggling faith, to guide the perplexed, to comfort the broken-hearted? The preparation, as we have learned it, is not upon the lips, but deep within. We must have the power to speak "out of a

pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned": more than that, in "*love* out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned." Then there must be an eager waiting; not for the realization of a perfect mind and character, which would be to seal our own lips in perpetual silence; not for a perfect occasion, or an open door without adversaries, which we shall never see. But a waiting upon God, in the silence of the spirit, in thought and prayer, till he shall quicken us anew with the vision of the Cross—of Christ the Interpreter, the Sovereign, the Saviour of the soul. Then we can preach; then we can speak the word of the Cross, the deathless evangel, in our ministry to the congregation.

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